00098417

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

PLAYS AND PURITANS

AND OTHER

HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

Engraved by J. Adams

Sir Walter Raleigh.

Engraved by B. H. Jeavons after an Original Picture in Possession

of the Duke of Bath at Longleat

PLAYS AND PURITANS,

AND OTHER

HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

f. E 417

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1873.

[*The Right of Translation and Reproduction is reserved*]

00098417

CONTENTS.

I.

PAGE

PLAYS AND PURITANS 1

II.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND HIS TIME 81

III.

FROUDE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND 209

I.

PLAYS AND PURITANS.

I.

PLAYS AND PURITANS.[1]

THE British isles have been ringing for the last few years, with the word 'Art,' in its German sense; with 'High Art,' 'Symbolic Art,' 'Ecclesiastical Art,' 'Dramatic Art,' 'Tragic Art,' and so forth; and every

[1] THE NORTH BRITISH REVIEW, No. XLIX. — 1. 'Works of Beaumont and Fletcher.' London, 1679. — 2. 'Works of Ben Jonson.' London, 1692. — 3. 'Massinger's Plays.' Edited by William Gifford, Esq. London,. 1813. — 4. 'Works of John Webster.' Edited, &c., by Rev. Alexander Dyce. Pickering, London, 1830.— 5. 'Works of James Shirley.' Edited by Rev. A. Dyce. Murray, 1833. — 6. 'Works of T. Middleton.' Edited by the Rev. A. Dyce. Lumley, 1840. — 7. 'Comedies,' &c. By Mr. William Cartwright. London, 1651.—8. 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.' By Charles Lamb. Longmans and Co., 1808.—9. 'Histriomastix.' By W. Prynne, Utter-Barrister of Lincoln's Inn. London. 1633.—10. 'Northbrooke's Treatise against Plays,'. &c. (Shakspeare Soc.) 1843. —11. 'The Works of Bishop Hall.' Oxford, 1839. — 12. 'Marston's Satires.' London, 1600. — 13 'Jeremy Collier's Short View of the Profaneness, &c., of the English Stage.' London, 1730.—14. 'Langbaine's English Dramatists.' Oxford, 1691. — 15. 'Companion to the Playhouse.' London, 1764. — 16. 'Riccoboni's Account of the Theatres in Europe.' 1741.

well-educated person is expected, now-a-days, to know something about Art. Yet in spite of all translations of German 'Æsthetic' treatises, and 'Kunstnovellen,' the mass of the British people cares very little about the matter, and sits contented under the imputation of 'bad taste.' Our stage, long since dead, does not revive; our poetry is dying; our music, like our architecture, only reproduces the past; our painting is only first-rate when it handles landscapes and animals, and seems likely so to remain: but, meanwhile, nobody cares. Some of the deepest and most earnest minds vote the question, in general, a 'sham and a snare,' and whisper to each other confidentially, that Gothic art is beginning to be a 'bore,' and that Sir Christopher Wren was a very good fellow after all; while the middle classes look on the Art movement half amused, as with a pretty toy, half sulkily suspicious of Popery and Paganism; and think, apparently, that Art is very well when it means nothing, and is merely used to beautify drawing-rooms and shawl patterns; not to mention that, if there were no painters, Mr. Smith could not hand down to posterity likenesses of himself, Mrs. Smith, and family. But when 'Art' dares to be in earnest, and to mean something, much more to connect itself with religion, Smith's tone alters. He will teach 'Art' to keep in what he considers its place, and if it refuses, take the law of it, and put it into the Ecclesiastical Court. So he says, and what is more, he means what he says; and as all the world, from Hindostan to Canada, knows by most practical proof, what he means, he

sooner or later does, perhaps not always in the wisest way, but still he does it.

Thus, in fact, the temper of the British nation toward 'Art,' is simply that of the old Puritans, softened, no doubt, and widened; but only enough so as to permit Art, not to encourage it.

Some men's thoughts on this curious fact would probably take the form of some æsthetic à priori disquisition, beginning with 'the tendency of the infinite to reveal itself in the finite,' and ending—who can tell where? But as we cannot honestly arrogate to ourselves any skill in the scientia scientiarum, or say, 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the deep;' we shall leave æsthetic science to those who think that they comprehend it; we shall, as simple disciples of Bacon, deal with facts and with history as 'the will of God revealed in facts.' We will leave those who choose to settle what ought to be, and ourselves look patiently at that which actually was once, and which may be again; that so out of the conduct of our old Puritan forefathers (right or wrong), and their long war against 'Art,' we may learn a wholesome lesson; as we doubtless shall, if we believe firmly that our history is neither more nor less than what the old Hebrew prophets called 'God's gracious dealings with His people,' and not say in our hearts, like some sentimental girl who sings Jacobite ballads (written forty years ago by men who cared no

more for the Stuarts than for the Ptolemies, and were ready to kiss the dust off George the Fourth's feet at his visit to Edinburgh)—'Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa puellis.'

The historian of a time of change has always a difficult and invidious task. For Revolutions, in the great majority of cases, arise not merely from the crimes of a few great men, but from a general viciousness and decay of the whole, or the majority, of the nation; and that viciousness is certain to be made up, in great part, of a loosening of domestic ties, of breaches of the Seventh Commandment, and of sins connected with them, which a writer is now hardly permitted to mention. An 'evil and adulterous generation' has been in all ages and countries the one marked out for intestine and internecine strife. That description is always applicable to a revolutionary generation; whether or not it also comes under the class of a superstitious one, 'seeking after a sign from heaven,' only half believing its own creed, and, therefore, on tiptoe for miraculous confirmations of it, at the same time that it fiercely persecutes any one who, by attempting innovation or reform, seems about to snatch from weak faith the last plank which keeps it from sinking into the abyss. In describing such an age, the historian lies under this paradoxical disadvantage, that his case is actually too strong for him to state it. If he tells the whole truth, the easy-going and respectable multitude, in easy-going and respectable days like these, will either shut their ears prudishly to his painful facts, or reject them as in-

credible, unaccustomed as they are to find similar horrors and abominations among people of their own rank, of whom they are naturally inclined to judge by their own standard of civilization. Thus if any one, in justification of the Reformation, and the British hatred of Popery during the sixteenth century, should dare to detail the undoubted facts of the Inquisition, and to comment on them dramatically enough to make his readers feel about them what men who witnessed them felt, he would be accused of a 'morbid love of horrors.' If any one, in order to show how the French Revolution of 1793 was really God's judgment on the profligacy of the ancien régime, were to paint that profligacy as the men of the ancien régime unblushingly painted it themselves, respectability would have a right to demand, 'How dare you, sir, drag such disgusting facts from their merited oblivion?' Those, again, who are really acquainted with the history of Henry the Eighth's marriages, are well aware of facts which prove him to have been, not a man of violent and lawless passions, but of a cold temperament and a scrupulous conscience; but which cannot be stated in print, save in the most delicate and passing hints, to be taken only by those who at once understand such matters, and really wish to know the truth; while young ladies in general will still look on Henry as a monster in human form, because no one dares, or indeed ought, to undeceive them by anything beyond bare assertion without proof.

'But what does it matter,' some one may say, 'what

young ladies think about history?' This it matters; that these young ladies will some day be mothers, and as such will teach their children their own notions of modern history; and that, as long as men confine themselves to the teaching of Roman and Greek history, and leave the history of their own country to be handled exclusively by their unmarried sisters, so long will slanders, superstitions, and false political principles be perpetuated in the minds of our boys and girls.

But a still worse evil arises from the fact that the historian's case is often too strong to be stated. There is always a reactionary party, or one at least which lingers sentimentally over the dream of past golden ages, such as that of which Cowley says, with a sort of naïve blasphemy, at which one knows not whether to smile or sigh,—

> When God, the cause to me and men unknown,
> Forsook the royal houses, and his own.

These have full liberty to say all they can in praise of the defeated system; but the historian has no such liberty to state the case against it. If he even asserts that he has counter-facts, but dare not state them, he is at once met with a præjudicium. The mere fact of his having ascertained the truth is imputed as a blame to him, in a sort of prudish cant. 'What a very improper person he must be to like to dabble in such improper books that they must not even be quoted.' If in self-defence he desperately gives his facts, he only increases

the feeling against him, whilst the reactionists, hiding their blushing faces, find in their modesty an excuse for avoiding the truth: if, on the other hand, he content himself with bare assertion, and with indicating the sources from whence his conclusions are drawn, what care the reactionists? They know well that the public will not take the trouble to consult manuscripts, State Papers, pamphlets, rare biographies, but will content themselves with ready-made history; and they therefore go on unblushing to republish their old romance, leaving poor truth, after she has been painfully haled up to the well's mouth, to tumble miserably to the bottom of it again.

In the face of this danger, we will go on to say as much as we dare of the great cause, Puritans *v.* Players, before our readers, trusting to find some of them at least sufficiently unacquainted with the common notions on the point, to form a fair decision.

What those notions are, is well known. Very many of her Majesty's subjects are of opinion that the first half of the seventeenth century (if the Puritans had not interfered and spoilt all), was the most beautiful period of the English nation's life; that in it the chivalry and ardent piety of the Middle Age were happily combined with modern art and civilization; that the Puritan hatred of the Court, of stage-plays, of the fashions of the time, was only 'a scrupulous and fantastical niceness;' barbaric and tasteless, if sincere; if

insincere, the basest hypocrisy; that the stage-plays, though coarse, were no worse than Shakspeare, whom everybody reads; and that if the Stuarts patronized the stage they also raised it, and exercised a purifying censorship. And many more who do not go all these lengths with the reactionists, and cannot make up their mind to look to the Stuart reigns either for model churchmen or model courtiers, are still inclined to sneer at the Puritan 'preciseness,' and to say lazily, that though, of course, something may have been wrong, yet there was no need to make such a fuss about the matter; and that at all events the Puritans were men of very bad taste.

Mr. Gifford, in his introduction to Massinger's plays (1813), was probably the spokesman of his own generation, certainly of a great part of this generation also, when he informs us, that 'with Massinger terminated the triumph of dramatic poetry; indeed, the stage itself survived him but a short time. The nation was convulsed to its centre by contending factions, and a set of austere and gloomy fanatics, enemies to every elegant amusement, and every social relaxation, rose upon the ruins of the State. Exasperated by the ridicule with which they had long been covered by the stage, they persecuted the actors with unrelenting severity, and consigned them, together with the writers, to hopeless obscurity and wretchedness. Taylor died in the extreme of poverty, Shirley opened a little school at Brentford, and Downe, the boast of the stage, kept an ale-house at Brentford. Others, and those the far greater number,

joined the royal standard, and exerted themselves with more gallantry than good fortune in the service of their old and indulgent master.'

We have not yet, perhaps, fully estimated, and certainly not yet fully recovered, what was lost in that unfortunate struggle. The arts were rapidly advancing to perfection under the fostering wing of a monarch who united in himself taste to feel, spirit to undertake, and munificence to reward. Architecture, painting, and poetry, were by turns the objects of his paternal care. Shakspeare was his 'closet companion,' Jonson his poet, and in conjunction with Inigo Jones, his favoured architect, produced those magnificent entertainments, &c.

* * * * * * *

He then goes on to account for the supposed sudden fall of dramatic art at the Restoration, by the somewhat far-fetched theory that—

Such was the horror created in the general mind by the perverse and unsocial government from which they had so fortunately escaped, that the people appear to have anxiously avoided all retrospect, and, with Prynne and Vicars, to have lost sight of Shakspeare and 'his fellows.' Instead, therefore, of taking up dramatic poetry where it abruptly ceased in the labours of Massinger, they elicited, as it were, a manner of their own, or fetched it from the heavy monotony of their continental neighbours.

So is history written, and, what is more, believed. The amount of misrepresentation in this passage (which would probably pass current with most readers in the present day, is quite ludicrous. In the first place, it will hardly be believed, that these words occur in an essay, which, after extolling Massinger as one of the greatest poets of his age, second, indeed, only to Shakspeare, also informs us (and, it seems, quite truly), that

so far from having been really appreciated or patronized, he maintained a constant struggle with adversity,—'that even the bounty of his particular friends, on which he chiefly relied, left him in a state of absolute dependence,'—that while 'other writers for the stage had their periods of good fortune, Massinger seems to have enjoyed no gleam of sunshine; his life was all one misty day, and "shadows, clouds, and darkness rested on it."'

So much for Charles's patronage of a really great poet. What sort of men he did patronize, practically and in earnest, we shall see hereafter, when we come to speak of Mr. Shirley.

But Mr. Gifford must needs give an instance to prove that Charles was 'not inattentive to the success of Massinger,' and a curious one it is; of the same class, unfortunately, as that with the man in the old story, who recorded with pride that the King had spoken to him, and—had told him to get out of the way.

Massinger in his 'King and the Subject' had introduced Don Pedro of Spain thus speaking—

> Monies! We'll raise supplies which way we please,
> And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which
> We'll mulct you as we shall think fit. The Cæsars
> In Rome were wise, acknowledging no law
> But what their swords did ratify, the wives
> And daughters of the senators bowing to
> Their will, as deities, &c.

Against which passage, Charles, reading over the play before he allowed of it, had written, 'This is too insolent,

and not to be printed.' Too insolent it certainly was, considering the state of public matters in the year 1638. It would be interesting enough to analyse the reasons which made Charles dislike in the mouth of Pedro sentiments so very like his own; but we must proceed, only pointing out the way in which men, determined to repeat the traditional clap-trap about the Stuarts, are actually blind to the meaning of the very facts which they themselves quote.

Where, then, do the facts of history contradict Mr. Gifford?

We believe that, so far from the triumph of dramatic poetry terminating with Massinger, dramatic art had been steadily growing worse from the first years of James; that instead of the arts advancing to perfection under Charles the First, they steadily deteriorated in quality, though the supply became more abundant; that so far from there having been a sudden change for the worse in the drama after the Restoration, the taste of the courts of Charles the First and of Charles the Second are indistinguishable; that the court poets, and probably the actors also, of the early part of Charles the Second's reign, had many of them belonged to the court of Charles the First, as did Davenant, the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle, Fanshaw, and Shirley himself; that the common notion of a 'new manner' having been introduced from France, after the Restoration, or indeed having come in at all, is not founded on fact, the only change being that the plays of Charles the Second's time were somewhat more stupid, and that while five of the

seven deadly sins had always had free licence on the stage, blasphemy and profane swearing were now enfranchised to fill up the seven. As for the assertion that the new manner (supposing it to have existed) was imported from France, there is far more reason to believe that the French copied us than we them, and that, if they did not learn from Charles the First's poets the superstition of 'the three unities,' they at least learnt to make ancient kings and heroes talk and act like seventeenth century courtiers, and to exchange their old clumsy masques and translations of Italian and Spanish farces for a comedy depicting native scoundrelism. Probably enough, indeed, the great and sudden development of the French stage, which took place in the middle of the seventeenth century, under Corneille and Molière, was excited by the English cavalier playwrights who took refuge in France.

No doubt, as Mr. Gifford says, the Puritans were exasperated against the stage-players by the insults heaped on them: but the cause of quarrel lay far deeper than any such personal soreness. The Puritans had attacked the players before the players meddled with them, and that on principle; with what justification must be considered hereafter. But the fact is (and this seems to have been, like many other facts, conveniently forgotten), that the Puritans were by no means alone in their protest against the stage, and that the war was not begun exclusively by them. As early as the latter half of the sixteenth century, not merely Northbrooke, Gosson, Stubs, and Reynolds, had lifted up their voices

against them, but Archbishop Parker, Bishop Babington, Bishop Hall, and the author of the 'Mirror for Magistrates.' The University of Oxford, in 1584, had passed a statute forbidding common plays and players in the university, on the very same moral grounds on which the Puritans objected to them. The city of London, in 1580, had obtained from the queen the suppression of plays on Sundays; and not long after, 'considering that play-houses and dicing-houses were traps for young gentlemen and others,' obtained leave from the queen and privy council to thrust the players out of the city, and to pull down the play-houses, five in number; and, paradoxical as it may seem, there is little doubt that, by the letter of the law, 'stage plays and enterludes' were, even to the end of Charles the First's reign, 'unlawful pastime,' being forbidden by 14 Eliz., 39 Eliz., 1 Jacobi, 3 Jacobi, and 1 Caroli, and the players subject to severe punishment as 'rogues and vagabonds.' The Act of 1 Jacobi seems even to have gone so far as to repeal the clauses which, in Elizabeth's reign, had allowed companies of players the protection of a 'baron or honourable person of greater degree,' who might 'authorize them to play under his hand and seal of arms.' So that the Puritans were only demanding of the sovereigns that they should enforce the very laws which they themselves had made, and which they and their nobles were setting at defiance. Whether the plays ought to have been put down, and whether the laws were necessary, is a different question; but certainly the court and the aristocracy stood in the questionable, though too common, position

of men who made laws which prohibited to the poor amusements in which they themselves indulged without restraint.

But were these plays objectionable? As far as the comedies are concerned, that will depend on the answer to the question, Are plays objectionable, the staple subject of which is adultery? Now, we cannot but agree with the Puritans, that adultery is not a subject for comedy at all. It may be for tragedy; but for comedy never. It is a sin; not merely theologically, but socially, one of the very worst sins, the parent of seven other sins,—of falsehood, suspicion, hate, murder, and a whole bevy of devils. The prevalence of adultery in any country has always been a sign and a cause of social insincerity, division, and revolution; where a people has learnt to connive and laugh at it, and to treat it as a light thing, that people has been always careles base, selfish, cowardly,—ripe for slavery. And we must say, that either the courtiers and Londoners of James and Charles the First were in that state; or that the poets were doing their best to make them so.

We shall not shock our readers by any details on this point; we shall only say, that there is hardly a comedy of the seventeenth century, with the exception of Shakspeare's, in which adultery is not introduced as a subject of laughter, and often made the staple of the whole plot. The seducer is, if not openly applauded, at least let to pass as a 'handsome gentleman;' the injured husband is, as in that Italian literature of which we shall speak shortly, the object of every kind of scorn

and ridicule. In this latter habit (common to most European nations) there is a sort of justice. A man can generally retain his wife's affections if he will behave himself like a man; and 'injured husbands' have for the most part no one to blame but themselves. But the matter is not a subject for comedy; not even in that case which has been always too common in France, Italy, and the Romish countries, and which seems to have been painfully common in England in the seventeenth century, when, by a 'mariage de convenance,' a young girl is married up to a rich idiot or a decrepit old man. Such things are not comedies, but tragedies; subjects for pity and for silence, not for brutal ribaldry. Therefore the men who look on them in the light which the Stuart dramatists looked are not good men, and do no good service to the country: especially when they erect adultery into a science, and seem to take a perverse pleasure in teaching their audience every possible method, accident, cause, and consequence of it; always, too, when they have an opportunity, pointing 'Eastward Ho!' i.e. to the city of London, as the quarter where court gallants can find boundless indulgence for their passions amid the fair wives of dull and cowardly citizens. If the citizens drove the players out of London, the playwrights took good care to have their revenge. The citizen is their standard butt. These shallow parasites, and their shallower sovereigns, seem to have taken a perverse, and, as it happened, a fatal pleasure, in insulting them. Sad it is to see in Shirley's 'Gamester,' Charles the First's favourite play, a passage like that in Act i. Scene 1,

where old Barnacle proclaims, unblushing, his own shame and that of his fellow-merchants. Surely, if Charles ever could have repented of any act of his own, he must have repented, in many a humiliating after-passage with that same city of London, of having given those base words his royal warrant and approbation.

The tragedies of the seventeenth century are, on the whole, as questionable as the comedies. That there are noble plays among them here and there, no one denies—any more than that there are exquisitely amusing plays among the comedies ; but as the staple interest of the comedies is dirt, so the staple interest of the tragedies is crime. Revenge, hatred, villany, incest, and murder upon murder, are their constant themes, and (with the exception of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson in his earlier plays, and perhaps Massinger) they handle these horrors with little or no moral purpose, save that of exciting and amusing the audience, and of displaying their own power of delineation, in a way which makes one but too ready to believe the accusations of the Puritans (supported as they are by many ugly anecdotes), that the play-writers and actors were mostly men of fierce and reckless lives, who had but too practical an acquaintance with the dark passions which they sketch. This is notoriously the case with most of the French novelists of the modern 'Literature of Horror,' and the two literatures are morally identical. We do not know of a complaint which can be justly brought against the School of Balzac and Dumas, which will not equally apply to the

average tragedy of the whole period preceding the civil wars.

This public appetite for horrors, for which they catered so greedily, tempted them toward another mistake, which brought upon them (and not undeservedly) heavy odium.

One of the worst counts against Dramatic Art (as well as against Pictorial), was the simple fact that it came from Italy. We must fairly put ourselves into the position of an honest Englishman of the seventeenth century, before we can appreciate the huge præjudicium which must needs have arisen in his mind against anything which could claim a Transalpine parentage. Italy was then not merely the stronghold of Popery. That in itself would have been a fair reason for others beside Puritans saying, 'If the root be corrupt, the fruit will be also: any expression of Italian thought and feeling must be probably unwholesome, while her vitals are being eaten out by an abominable falsehood, only half believed by the masses, and not believed at all by the higher classes, even those of the priesthood; but only kept up for their private aggrandizement.' But there was more than hypothesis in favour of the men who might say this; there was universal, notorious, shocking fact. It was a fact that Italy was the centre where sins were invented worthy of the doom of the Cities of the Plain, and from whence they spread to all nations who had connexion with her. We dare give no proof of this assertion. The Italian morals and the Italian lighter literature of the sixteenth and of the

beginning of the seventeenth century were such, that one is almost ashamed to confess that one has looked into them, although the painful task is absolutely necessary for one who wishes to understand either the European society of the time or the Puritan hatred of the drama. Non ragionam di lor: ma guarda è passa.

It is equally a fact, that these vices were imported into England by the young men who, under pretence of learning the Italian polish, travelled to Italy. From the days of Gabriel Harvey and Lord Oxford, about the middle of Elizabeth's reign, this foul tide had begun to set toward England, gaining an additional coarseness and frivolity in passing through the French Court (then an utter Gehenna) in its course hitherward; till, to judge by Marston's Satires, certain members of the higher classes had, by the beginning of James's reign, learnt nearly all which the Italians had to teach them. Marston writes in a rage, it is true; foaming, stamping, and vapouring too much to escape the suspicion of exaggeration: yet he dared not have published the things which he does, had he not fair ground for some at least of his assertions. And Marston, be it remembered, was no Puritan, but a playwright, and Ben Jonson's friend.

Bishop Hall, in his Satires, describes things bad enough, though not so bad as Marston does: but what is even more to the purpose, he wrote, and dedicated to James, a long dissuasive against the fashion of running abroad. Whatever may be thought of the arguments

of 'Quo vadis?—a Censure of Travel,' its main drift is clear enough. Young gentlemen, by going to Italy, learnt to be fops and profligates, and probably Papists into the bargain. These assertions there is no denying. Since the days of Lord Oxford, most of the ridiculous and expensive fashions in dress had come from Italy, as well as the newest modes of sin; and the playwrights themselves make no secret of the fact. There is no need to quote instances: they are innumerable; and the most serious are not fit to be quoted, scarcely the titles of the plays in which they occur; but they justify almost every line of Bishop Hall's questions (of which some of the strongest expressions have necessarily been omitted) :—

> What mischief have we among us which we have not borrowed? To begin at our skin: who knows not whence we had the variety of our vain disguises? As if we had not wit enough to be foolish unless we were taught it. These dresses being constant in their mutability, show us our masters. What is it that we have not learned of our neighbours, save only to be proud good-cheap? whom would it not vex, to see how that the other sex hath learned to make anticks and monsters of themselves? Whence come their (absurd fashions); but the one from some ill-shaped dame of France, the other from the worse-minded courtezans of Italy? Whence else learned they to daub these mud-walls with apothecaries' mortar; and those high washes, which are so cunningly licked on, that the wet napkin of Phryne should be deceived? Whence the frizzled and powdered bushes of their borrowed hair? As if they were ashamed of the head of God's making, and proud of the tire-woman's. Where learned we that devilish art and practice of duel, wherein men seek honour in blood, and are taught the ambition of being glorious butchers of men? Where had we that luxurious delicacy in our feasts, in which the nose is no less pleased than the palate, and the eye no less than either? wherein the piles of dishes make barricadoes against the appetite, and with a pleasing encumbrance trouble a hungry guest.

Where those forms of ceremonious quaffing, in which men have learned to make gods of others and beasts of themselves, and lose their reason while they pretend to do reason? Where the lawlessness (miscalled freedom) of a wild tongue, that runs, with reins on the neck, through the bed-chambers of princes, their closets, their council tables, and spares not the very cabinet of their breasts, much less can be barred out of the most retired secrecy of inferior greatness? Where, the change of noble attendance and hospitality into four wheels and some few butterflies? Where the art of dishonesty in practical Machiavelism, in false equivocations? Where, the slight account of that filthiness, which is but condemned as venial, and tolerated as not unnecessary? Where, the skill of civil and honourable hypocrisy, in those formal compliments, which do neither expect belief from others, nor carry any from ourselves? Where (and here Bishop Hall begins to speak concerning things on which we must be silent, as of matters notorious and undeniable.) Where, that close Atheism, which secretly laughs God in the face, and thinks it weakness to believe, wisdom to profess any religion? Where the bloody and tragical science of king-killing, the new divinity of disobedience and rebellion? with too many other evils, wherewith foreign conversation hath endangered the infection of our peace?—Bishop Hall's 'Quo Vadis, or a Censure of Travel,' vol. xii. sect. 22.

Add to these a third plain fact, that Italy was the mother-country of the drama, where it had thriven with wonderful fertility, ever since the beginning of the sixteenth century. However much truth there may be in the common assertion, that the old 'miracle plays' and 'mysteries' were the parents of the English drama (as they certainly were of the Spanish and the Italian), we have yet to learn how much our stage owed, from its first rise under Elizabeth, to direct importations from Italy. This is merely thrown out as a suggestion; to establish the fact would require a wide acquaintance with the early Italian drama; meanwhile, let two patent facts have their due weight. The names of the

characters in most of our early regular comedies are Italian; so are the scenes; and so, one hopes, are the manners: at least they profess to be so. Next, the plots of many of the dramas are notoriously taken from the Italian novelists; and if Shakspeare (who had a truly divine instinct for finding honey where others found poison) went to Cinthio for 'Othello' and 'Measure for Measure,' to Bandello for 'Romeo and Juliet,' and to Boccaccio for 'Cymbeline,' there were plenty of other playwrights who would go to the same sources for worse matter, or at least catch from these profligate writers somewhat of their Italian morality, which exalts adultery into a virtue, seduction into a science, and revenge into a duty; which revels in the horrible as freely as any French novelist of the romantic school; and whose only value is its pitiless exposure of the profligacy of the Romish priesthood: if an exposure can be valuable which makes a mock equally of things truly and falsely sacred, and leaves on the reader's mind the fear that the writer saw nothing in heaven or earth worthy of belief, respect, or self-sacrifice, save personal enjoyment.

Now this is the morality of the Italian novelists; and to judge from their vivid sketches (which, they do not scruple to assert, were drawn from life, and for which they give names, places, and all details which might amuse the noble gentlemen and ladies to whom these stories are dedicated), this had been the morality of Italy for some centuries past. This, also, is the general morality of the English stage in the seventeenth

century. Can we wonder that thinking men should have seen a connexion between Italy and the stage? Certainly the playwrights put themselves between the horns of an ugly dilemma. Either the vices which they depicted were those of general English society, and of themselves also (for they lived in the very heart of town and court foppery); or else they were the vices of a foreign country, with which the English were comparatively unacquainted. In the first case, we can only say, that the Stuart age in England was one which deserved purgation of the most terrible kind, and to get rid of which the severest and most abnormal measures would have been not only justifiable, but, to judge by the experience of all history, necessary; for extraordinary diseases never have been, and never will be, eradicated save by extraordinary medicines. In the second case, the playwrights were wantonly defiling the minds of the people, and instead of 'holding up a mirror to vice,' instructing frail virtue in vices which she had not learned, and fully justifying old Prynne's indignant complaint:—

> The acting of foreign, obsolete, and long since forgotten villanies on the stage, is so far from working a detestation of them in the spectators' minds (who, perchance, were utterly ignorant of them, till they were acquainted with them at the play-house, and so needed no dehortation from them), that it often excites dangerous dunghill spirits, who have nothing in them for to make them eminent, to reduce them into practice, of purpose to perpetuate their spurious ill-serving memories to posterity, leastwise in some tragic interlude.'

That Prynne spoke herein nought but sober sense, our own police-reports will sufficiently prove. It is

notorious that the representation, in our own days, of 'Tom and Jerry' and of 'Jack Sheppard,' did excite dozens of young lads to imitate the heroes of those dramas; and such must have been the effect of similar and worse representations in the Stuart age. No rational man will need the authority of Bishop Babington, Doctor Leighton, Archbishop Parker, Purchas, Sparkes, Reynolds, White, or any one else, Churchman or Puritan, prelate or 'penitent reclaimed play-poet,' like Stephen Gosson, to convince him that, as they assert, citizens' wives (who are generally represented as the proper subjects for seduction) 'have, even on their deathbeds, with tears confessed that they have received, at these spectacles, such evil infections as have turned their minds from chaste cogitations, and made them, of honest women, light huswives; . . . have brought their husbands into contempt, their children into question, ... and their souls into the assault of a dangerous state;' or that 'The devices of carrying and re-carrying letters by laundresses, practising with pedlars to transport their tokens by colorable means to sell their merchandise, and other kinds of policies to beguile fathers of their children, husbands of their wives, guardians of their wards, and masters of their servants, were aptly taught in these schools of abuse.'

The matter is simple enough. We should not allow these plays to be acted in our own day, because we know that they would produce their effects. We should

* 'The Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres.' Penned by a Play-poet.

call him a madman who allowed his daughters or his servants to see such representations.* Why, in all fairness, were the Puritans wrong in condemning that which we now have absolutely forbidden?

We will go no further into the details of the licentiousness of the old play-houses. Gosson, and his colleague the anonymous Penitent, assert them, as does Prynne, to have been not only schools but ante-chambers to houses of a worse kind, and that the lessons learned in the pit were only not practised also in the pit. What reason have we to doubt it, who know that till Mr. Macready commenced a practical reformation of this abuse, for which his name will be ever respected, our own comparatively purified stage was just the same? Let any one who remembers the saloons of Drury Lane and Covent Garden thirty years ago judge for himself what the accessories of the Globe or the Fortune must have been, in days when players were allowed to talk inside, as freely as the public behaved outside.

Not that the poets or the players had any conscious intention of demoralizing their hearers, any more than they had of correcting them. We will lay on them the blame of no special 'malus animus:' but, at the same time, we must treat their fine words about 'holding a mirror up to vice,' and 'showing the age its own deformity,' as mere cant, which the men themselves must have spoken tongue in cheek. It was as much an in-

* This was written sixteen years ago. We have become since then more amenable to the influences of French civilization.

sincere cant in those days as it was when, two generations later, Jeremy Collier exposed its falsehood in the mouth of Congreve. If the poets had really intended to show vice its own deformity, they would have represented it (as Shakspeare always does) as punished, and not as triumphant. It is ridiculous to talk of moral purpose in works in which there is no moral justice. The only condition which can excuse the representation of evil is omitted. The simple fact is, that the poets wanted to draw a house; that this could most easily be done by the coarsest and most violent means; and that not being often able to find stories exciting enough in the past records of sober English society, they went to Italy and Spain for the violent passions and wild crimes of southern temperaments, excited, and yet left lawless, by a superstition believed in enough to darken and brutalize, but not enough to control, its victims. Those were the countries which just then furnished that strange mixture of inward savagery with outward civilization, which is the immoral playwright's fittest material; because, while the inward savagery moves the passions of the audience, the outward civilization brings the character near enough to them to give them a likeness of themselves in their worst moments, such as no Mystery of Cain or Tragedy of Prometheus can give.

Does this seem too severe in the eyes of those who value the drama for its lessons in human nature? On that special point something must be said hereafter. Meanwhile, hear one of the sixteenth century poets; one who cannot be suspected of any leaning toward

Puritanism; one who had as high notions of his vocation as any man; and one who so far fulfilled those notions as to become a dramatist inferior only to Shakspeare. Let Ben Jonson himself speak, and in his preface to 'Volpone,' tell us in his own noble prose, what he thought of the average morality of his contemporary playwrights:—

For if men will impartially and not asquint look toward the offices and functions of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being a good poet, without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good discipline, inflame grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or, as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master in manners; and can alone (or with a few) effect the business of mankind; this, I take him, is no subject for pride and ignorance to exercise their railing rhetoric upon. But it will here be hastily answered, that the writers of these days are other things, that not only their manners but their natures are inverted, and nothing remaining of them of the dignity of poet but the abused name, which every scribe usurps; that now, especially in dramatick, or (as they term it) stage poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemies, all licence of offence toward God and man is practised. I dare not deny a great part of this (and I am sorry I dare not), because in some men's abortive features (and would God they had never seen the light!) it is over true; but that all are bound on his bold adventure for hell, is a most uncharitable thought, and uttered, a more malicious slander. For every particular I can (and from a most clear conscience) affirm, that I have ever trembled to think toward the least profaneness, and have loathed the use of such foul and unwashed . . . [his expression is too strong for quotation] as is now made the food of the scene.

It is a pity to curtail this splendid passage, both for its lofty ideal of poetry, and for its corroboration of the Puritan complaints against the stage: but a few lines on, a still stronger sentence occurs:—

The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the stage, in all their masculine interludes, what liberal soul doth not abhor? Where nothing but filth of the mire is uttered, and that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, such racked metaphors, with (indecency) able to violate the ear of a Pagan, and blasphemy to turn the blood of a Christian to water.

So speaks Ben Jonson in 1605, not finding, it seems, play-writing a peaceful trade, or play-poets and play-hearers improving company. After him, we should say no further testimony on this unpleasant matter ought to be necessary. He may have been morose, fanatical, exaggerative; but his bitter words suggest at least this dilemma. Either they are true, and the play-house atmosphere (as Prynne says it was) that of Gehenna: or they are untrue, and the mere fruits of spite and envy against more successful poets. And what does that latter prove, but that the greatest poet of his age (after Shakspeare has gone) was not as much esteemed as some poets whom we know to have been more filthy and more horrible than he? which, indeed, is the main complaint of Jonson himself. It will be rejoined, of course, that he was an altogether envious man; that he envied Shakspeare, girded at his York and Lancaster plays, at 'The Winter's Tale' and 'The Tempest,' in the prologue to 'Every Man in his Humour;' and, indeed, Jonson's writings, and those of many other playwrights, leave little doubt that stage rivalry called out the bitterest hatred, and the basest vanity; and that, perhaps, Shakspeare's great soul was giving way to the pettiest passions, when in Hamlet he

had his fling at the 'aiery of children, little eyæses, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for 't.' It may be that he was girding in return at Jonson, when he complained that 'their writers did them wrong to make them complain against their own succession,' i.e., against themselves, when 'grown to common players.' Be that as it may. Great Shakspeare may have been unjust to only less great Jonson, as Jonson was to Shakspeare: but Jonson certainly is not so in all his charges. Some of the faults which he attributes to Shakspeare are really faults.

At all events, we know that he was not unjust to the average of his contemporaries, by the evidence of the men's own plays. We know that the decadence of the stage of which he complains went on uninterruptedly after his time, and in the very direction which he pointed out.

On this point there can be no doubt; for these hodmen of poetry 'made a wall in our father's house, and the bricks are alive to testify unto this day.' So that we cannot do better than give a few samples thereof, at least samples decent enough for modern readers, and let us begin, not with a hodman, but with Jonson himself.

Now, Ben Jonson is worthy of our love and respect, for he was a very great genius, immaculate or not; 'Rare Ben,' with all his faults. One can never look without affection on the magnificent manhood of that rich free forehead, even though one may sigh over the

petulance and pride which brood upon the lip and eyebrow,

> Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love.

A Michael Angelo who could laugh, which that Italian one, one fancies, never could. One ought to have, too, a sort of delicacy about saying much against him; for he is dead, and can make, for the time being at least, no rejoinder. There are dead men whom one is not much ashamed to 'upset' after their death, because one would not have been much afraid of doing so when they were alive. But 'Rare Ben' had terrible teeth, and used them too. A man would have thought twice ere he snapt at him living, and therefore it seems somewhat a cowardly trick to bark securely at his ghost. Nevertheless, it is no unfair question to ask—Do not his own words justify the Puritan complaints? But if so, why does he rail at the Puritans for making their complaints? His answer would have been that they railed in ignorance, not merely at low art, as we call it now, but at high art and all art. Be it so. Here was their fault, if fault it was in those days. For to discriminate between high art and low art they must have seen both. And for Jonson's wrath to be fair and just he must have shown them both. Let us see what the pure drama is like which he wishes to substitute for the foul drama of his contemporaries; and, to bring the matter nearer home, let us take one of the plays in which he hits deliberately at the Puritans, namely the 'Alchemist,' said to have been first acted in 1610, 'by

the king's majesty's servants.' Look, then, at this well-known play, and take Jonson at his word. Allow that Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome are, as they very probably are, fair portraits of a class among the sectaries of the day: but bear in mind, too, that if this be allowed, the other characters shall be held as fair portraits also. Otherwise, all must be held to be caricature; and then the onslaught on the Puritans vanishes into nothing, or worse. Now in either case, Ananias and Tribulation are the best men in the play. They palter with their consciences, no doubt; but they have consciences, which no one else in the play has, except poor Surly; and he, be it remembered, comes to shame, is made a laughing-stock, and 'cheats himself,' as he complains at last, 'by that same foolish vice of honesty:' while in all the rest what have we but every form of human baseness? Lovell, the master, if he is to be considered a negative character as doing no wrong, has, at all events, no more recorded of him than the noble act of marrying by deceit a young widow for the sake of her money, the philosopher's stone, by the bye, and highest object of most of the seventeenth century dramatists. If most of the rascals meet with due disgrace, none of them is punished; and the greatest rascal of all, who, when escape is impossible, turns traitor, and after deserving the cart and pillory a dozen times for his last and most utter baseness, 'is rewarded by full pardon, and the honour of addressing the audience at the play's end in the most smug and self-satisfied tone, and of 'putting himself on you that are my country,'

not doubting, it seems, that there were among them a fair majority who would think him a very smart fellow, worthy of all imitation.

Now, is this play a moral or an immoral one? Of its coarseness we say nothing. We should not endure it, of course, now-a-days; and on that point something must be said hereafter: but if we were to endure plain speaking as the only method of properly exposing vice, should we endure the moral which, instead of punishing vice, rewards it?

And, meanwhile, what sort of a general state of society among the Anti-Puritan party does the play sketch? What but a background of profligacy and frivolity?

A proof, indeed, of the general downward tendencies of the age may be found in the writings of Ben Jonson himself. Howsoever pure and lofty the ideal which he laid down for himself (and no doubt honestly) in the Preface to 'Volpone,' he found it impossible to keep up to it. Nine years afterwards we find him, in his 'Bartholomew Fair,' catering to the low tastes of James the First in ribaldry at which, if one must needs laugh—as who that was not more than man could help doing over that scene between Rabbi Busy and the puppets?—shallow and untrue as the gist of the humour is, one feels the next moment as if one had been indulging in unholy mirth at the expense of some grand old Noah who has come to shame in his cups.

But lower still does Jonson fall in that Masque of the 'Gipsies Metamorphosed,' presented to the king in

1621, when Jonson was forty-seven; old enough, one would have thought, to know better. It is not merely the insincere and all but blasphemous adulation which is shocking,—that was but the fashion of the times: but the treating these gipsies and beggars, and their 'thieves' Latin' dialect, their filthiness and cunning, ignorance and recklessness, merely as themes for immoral and inhuman laughter. Jonson was by no means the only poet of that day to whom the hordes of profligate and heathen nomads which infested England were only a comical phase of humanity, instead of being, as they would be now, objects of national shame and sorrow, of pity and love, which would call out in the attempt to redeem them the talents and energies of good men. But Jonson certainly sins more in this respect than any of his contemporaries. He takes a low pleasure in parading his intimate acquaintance with these poor creatures' foul slang and barbaric laws; and is, we should say, the natural father of that lowest form of all literature which has since amused the herd, though in a form greatly purified, in the form of 'Beggars' Operas,' 'Dick Turpins,' and 'Jack Sheppards.' Everything which is objectionable in such modern publications as these was exhibited, in far grosser forms, by one of the greatest poets who ever lived, for the amusement of a king of England; and yet the world still is at a loss to know why sober and God-fearing men detested both the poet and the king.

And that Masque is all the more saddening exhibi-

tion of the degradation of a great soul, because in it, here and there, occur passages of the old sweetness and grandeur; disjecta membra poetæ such as these, which, even though addressed to James, are perfect:—

3rd Gipsy.

Look how the winds upon the waves grow tame,
Take up land sounds upon their purple wings,
And, catching each from other, bear the same
To every angle of their sacred springs.
So will we take his praise, and hurl his name
About the globe, in thousand airy rings.

* * * * * *

Let us pass on. Why stay to look upon the fall of such a spirit?

There is one point, nevertheless, which we may as well speak of here, and shortly; for spoken of it must be as delicately as is possible. The laugh raised at Zeal-for-the-land Busy's expense, in 'Bartholomew Fair,' turns on the Puritan dislike of seeing women's parts acted by boys. Jonson shirks the question by making poor Busy fall foul of puppets instead of live human beings: but the question is shirked nevertheless. What honest answer he could have given to the Puritans is hard to conceive. Prynne, in his Histriomastix, may have pushed a little too far the argument drawn from the prohibition in the Mosaic law: yet one would fancy that the practice was forbidden by Moses' law, not arbitrarily, but because it was a bad practice, which did harm, as every antiquarian knows that it did; and that, therefore, Prynne was but reasonable in supposing that in his day a similar practice would produce a

similar evil. Our firm conviction is that it did so, and that as to the matter of fact, Prynne was perfectly right; and that to make a boy a stage-player was pretty certainly to send him to the Devil. Let any man of common sense imagine to himself the effect on a young boy's mind which would be produced by representing shamelessly before a public audience, not merely the language, but the passions, of such women as occur in almost every play. We appeal to common sense—would any father allow his own children to personate, even in private, the basest of mankind? And yet we must beg pardon: for common sense, it is to be supposed, has decided against us, as long as parents allow their sons to act yearly at Westminster the stupid low art of Terence, while grave and reverend prelates and divines look on approving. The Westminster play has had no very purifying influence on the minds of the young gentlemen who personate heathen damsels; and we only ask, What must have been the effect of representing far fouler characters than Terence's, on the minds of uneducated lads of the lower classes? Prynne and others hint at still darker abominations than the mere defilement of the conscience: we shall say nothing of them, but that, from collateral evidence, we believe every word they say; and that when pretty little Cupid's mother, in Jonson's Christmas masque, tells how 'She could have had money enough for him, had she been tempted, and have let him out by the week to the king's players,' and how 'Master Burbadge has been about and about with her for him, and old Mr.

Hemings too,' she had better have tied a stone round the child's neck, and hove him over London Bridge, than have handed him over to thrifty Burbadge, that he might make out of his degradation more money to buy land withal, and settle comfortably in his native town, on the fruits of others' sin. Honour to old 'Prynne, bitter and narrow as he was, for his passionate and eloquent appeals to the humanity and Christianity of England, in behalf of those poor children whom not a bishop on the bench interfered to save; but, while they were writing and persecuting in behalf of baptismal regeneration, left those to perish whom they declared so stoutly to be regenerate in baptism. Prynne used that argument too, and declared these stage-plays to be among the very 'pomps and vanities which Christians renounced at baptism.' He may or may not have been wrong in identifying them with the old heathen pantomimes and games of the Circus, and in burying his adversaries under a mountain of quotations from the Fathers and the Romish divines (for Prynne's reading seems to have been quite enormous). Those very prelates could express reverence enough for the Fathers when they found aught in them which could be made to justify their own system, though perhaps it had really even less to do therewith than the Roman pantomimes had with the Globe Theatre: but the Church of England had retained in her Catechism the old Roman word 'pomps,' as one of the things which were to be renounced; and as 'pomps' confessedly meant at first those very spectacles of the

heathen circus and theatre, Prynne could not be very illogical in believing that, as it had been retained, it was retained to testify against something, and probably against the thing in England most like the 'pomps' of heathen Rome. Meanwhile, let Churchmen decide whether of the two was the better Churchman—Prynne, who tried to make the baptismal covenant mean something, or Laud, who allowed such a play as 'The Ordinary' to be written by his especial protégé, Cartwright, the Oxford scholar, and acted before him probably by Oxford scholars, certainly by christened boys. We do not pretend to pry into the counsels of the Most High; but if unfaithfulness to a high and holy trust, when combined with lofty professions and pretensions, does (as all history tells us that it does) draw down the vengeance of Almighty God, then we need look no further than this one neglect of the seventeenth century prelates (whether its cause was stupidity, insincerity, or fear of the monarchs to whose tyranny they pandered), to discover full reason why it pleased God to sweep them out awhile with the besom of destruction.

There is another feature in the plays of the seventeenth century, new, as far as we know, alike to English literature and manners; and that is, the apotheosis of Rakes. Let the faults of the Middle Age, or of the Tudors, have been what they may, that class of person was in their time simply an object of disgust. The word which then signified a Rake is, in the Morte d'Arthur (temp. Ed. IV.), the foulest term of disgrace which can be cast upon a knight; while even up to the

latter years of Elizabeth, the contempt of parents and elders seems to have been thought a grievous sin. In Italy, even, fountain of all the abominations of the age, respect for the fifth commandment seems to have lingered after all the other nine had been forgotten; we find Castiglione, in his 'Corteggiano' (about 1520), regretting the modest and respectful training of the generation which had preceded him; and to judge from facts, the Puritan method of education, stern as it was, was neither more nor less than the method which, a generation before, had been common to Romanist and to Protestant, Puritan and Churchman.

But with the Stuart era (perhaps at the end of Elizabeth's reign), fathers became gradually personages who are to be disobeyed, sucked of their money, fooled, even now and then robbed and beaten, by the young gentlemen of spirit; and the most Christian kings, James and Charles, with their queens and court, sit by to see ruffling and roystering, beating the watch and breaking windows, dicing, drinking, duelling, and profligacy (provided the victim be not a woman of gentle birth), set forth not merely as harmless amusements for young gentlemen, but (as in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of 'Monsieur Thomas') virtues without which a man is despicable. On this point, as on many others, those who have, for ecclesiastical reasons, tried to represent the first half of the seventeenth century as a golden age, have been altogether unfair. There is no immorality of the court plays of Charles II.'s time which may not be found in those of Charles I.'s.

Sedley and Etherege are not a whit worse, but only more stupid, than Fletcher or Shirley; and Monsieur Thomas is the spiritual father of all Angry lads, Rufflers, Blades, Bullies, Mohocks, Corinthians, and Dandies, down to the last drunken clerk who wrenched off a knocker, or robbed his master's till to pay his losses at a betting-office. True; we of this generation can hardly afford to throw stones. The scapegrace ideal of humanity has enjoyed high patronage within the last half century; and if Monsieur Thomas seemed lovely in the eyes of James and Charles, so did Jerry and Corinthian Tom in those of some of the first gentlemen of England. Better days, however, have dawned: 'Tom and Jerry,' instead of running three hundred nights, would be as little endured on the stage as 'Monsieur Thomas' would be; the heroes who aspire toward that ideal are now consigned by public opinion to Rhadamanthus and the treadmill; while if, like Monsieur Thomas, they knocked down their own father, they would, instead of winning a good wife, be 'cut' by braver and finer gentlemen than Monsieur Thomas himself: but what does this fact prove, save that England has at last discovered that the Puritan opinion of this matter (as of some others) was the right one?

There is another aspect in which we must look at the Stuart patronage of profligate scapegraces on the stage. They would not have been endured on the stage, had they not been very common off it; and if there had not been, too, in the hearts of spectators, some lurking excuse for them: it requires no great

penetration to see what that excuse must have been. If the Stuart age, aristocracy, and court, were as perfect as some fancy them, such fellows would have been monstrous in it and inexcusable, probably impossible. But if it was (as it may be proved to have been) an utterly deboshed, insincere, decrepit, and decaying age, then one cannot but look on Monsieur Thomas with something of sympathy as well as pity. Take him as he stands; he is a fellow of infinite kindliness, wit, spirit, and courage: but with nothing on which to employ those powers. He would have done his work admirably in an earnest and enterprising age, as a Hudson's Bay Company clerk, an Indian civilian, a captain of a man-of-war—anything where he could find a purpose and a work. Doubt it not. How many a Monsieur Thomas of our own days, whom a few years ago one had rashly fancied capable of nothing higher than coulisses and cigars, private theatricals and white kid-gloves, has been not only fighting and working like a man, but meditating and writing homeward like a Christian, through the dull misery of those trenches at Sevastopol; and has found, amid the Crimean snows, that merciful fire of God, which could burn the chaff out of his heart, and thaw the crust of cold frivolity into warm and earnest life. And even at such a youth's worst, reason and conscience alike forbid us to deal out to him the same measure as we do to the offences of the cool and hoary profligate, or to the darker and subtler spiritual sins of the false professor. But if the wrath of God be not unmistakeably and

practically revealed from Heaven against youthful profligacy and disobedience, in after sorrow and shame of some kind or other, against what sin is it revealed? It was not left for our age to discover that the wages of sin is death: but Charles, his players and his courtiers, refused to see what the very heathen had seen, and so had to be taught the truth over again by another and a more literal lesson; and what neither stage-plays nor sermons could teach them, sharp shot and cold steel did.

'But still the Puritans were barbarians for hating Art altogether.' The fact was, that they hated what art they saw in England, and that this was low art, bad art, growing ever lower and worse. If it be said that Shakspeare's is the very highest art, the answer is, that what they hated in him was not his high art, but his low art, the foul and horrible elements which he had in common with his brother play-writers. True, there is far less of these elements in Shakspeare than in any of his compeers: but they are there. And what the Puritans hated in him was exactly what we have to expunge before we can now represent his plays. If it be said that they ought to have discerned and appreciated the higher elements in him, so ought the rest of their generation. The Puritans were surely not bound to see in Shakspeare what his patrons and brother poets did not see. And it is surely a matter of fact, that the deep spiritual knowledge which makes, and will make, Shakspeare's plays (and them alone of all the seventeenth century plays) a heritage for all men

and all ages, quite escaped the insight of his contemporaries, who probably put him in the same rank which Webster, writing about 1612, has assigned to him:

> I have ever cherished a good opinion of other men's witty labours, especially of that full and heightened style of Master Chapman; the laboured and understanding works of Mr. Jonson; the no less witty composures of the both wittily excellent Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Fletcher; and lastly (without wrong last to be named), the right happy and copious industry of Shakspeare, Mr. Dekker, and Mr. Heywood.

While Webster, then, one of the best poets of the time, sees nothing in Shakspeare beyond the same 'happy and copious industry' which he sees in Dekker and Heywood,—while Cartwright, perhaps the only young poet of real genius in Charles the First's reign, places Fletcher's name 'Twixt Jonson's grave and Shakspeare's lighter sound,' and tells him that,

> Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best wit lies
> I' th' ladies' questions, and the fool's replies.
> * * * * * *
> Whose wit our nice times would obsceneness call.
> * * * * * *
> Nature was all his art; thy vein was free
> As his, but without his scurrility;*

while even Milton, who, Puritan as he was, loved art with all his soul, only remarks on Shakspeare's marvellous lyrical sweetness, 'his native wood-notes wild;'

* What canon of cleanliness, now lost, did Cartwright possess, which enabled him to pronounce Fletcher, or indeed himself, purer than Shakspeare, and his times 'nicer' than those of James? To our generation, less experienced in the quantitative analysis of moral dirt, they will appear all equally foul.

what shame to the Puritans if they, too, did not discover the stork among the cranes?

An answer has often been given to arguments of this kind, which deserves a few moments' consideration. It is said, 'the grossness of the old play-writers was their misfortune, not their crime. It was the fashion of the age. It is not our fashion, certainly; but they meant no harm by it. The age was a free-spoken one; and perhaps none the worse for that.' Mr. Dyce, indeed, the editor of Webster's plays, seems inclined to exalt this habit into a virtue. After saying that the licentious and debauched are made 'as odious in representation as they would be if they were actually present'—an assertion which must be flatly denied, save in the case of Shakspeare, who seldom or never, to our remembrance, seems to forget that the wages of sin is death, and who, however coarse he may be, keeps stoutly on the side of virtue—Mr. Dyce goes on to say, that 'perhaps the language of the stage is purified in proportion as our morals are deteriorated; and we dread the mention of the vices which we are not ashamed to practise; while our forefathers, under the sway of a less fastidious, but a more energetic principle of virtue, were careless of words, and only considerate of actions.'

To this clever piece of special pleading we can only answer, that the fact is directly contrary; that there is a mass of unanimous evidence which cannot be controverted, to prove that England, in the first half of the seventeenth century, was far more immoral than in the nineteenth; that the proofs lie patent to any

dispassionate reader: but that these pages will not be defiled by the details of them.

Let it be said that 'coarseness was 'the fashion of the age.' The simple question is, was it a good fashion or a bad? It is said—with little or no proof—that in simple states of society, much manly virtue, and much female purity, have often consisted with very broad language and very coarse manners. But what of that? Drunkards may very often be very honest and brave men. Does that make drunkenness no sin? Or will honesty and courage prevent a man's being the worse for hard drinking? If so, why have we given up coarseness of language? And why has it been the better, rather than the worse part of the nation, the educated and religious rather than the ignorant and wicked, who have given it up? Why? Simply because this nation, and all other nations on the Continent, in proportion to their morality, have found out that coarseness of language is, to say the least, unfit and inexpedient; that if it be wrong to do certain things, it is also, on the whole, right not to talk of them; that even certain things which are right and blessed and holy, lose their sanctity by being dragged cynically to the light of day, instead of being left in the mystery in which God has wisely shrouded them. On the whole, one is inclined to suspect the defence of coarseness as insincere. Certainly, in our day, it will not hold. If any one wishes to hear coarse language in 'good society,' he can hear it, I am told, in Paris: but one questions whether Parisian society be now 'under the sway of a more energetic principle of

virtue' than our own. The sum total of the matter seems to be, that England has found out that on this point again the old Puritans were right. And, quaintly enough, the party in the English Church who hold the Puritans most in abhorrence are the most scrupulous now upon this very point; and, in their dread of contaminating the minds of youth, are carrying education, at school and college, to such a more than Puritan precision, that with the most virtuous and benevolent intentions, they are in danger of giving lads merely a conventional education,—a hot-house training which will render them incapable hereafter of facing either the temptations or the labour of the world. They themselves republished Massinger's 'Virgin Martyr,' because it was a pretty Popish story, probably written by a Papist—for there is every reason to believe that Massinger was one—setting forth how the heroine was attended all through by an angel in the form of a page, and how—not to mention the really beautiful ancient fiction about the fruits which Dorothea sends back from Paradise—Theophilus overcomes the devil by means of a cross composed of flowers. Massinger's account of Theophilus' conversation will, we fear, make those who know anything of that great crisis of the human spirit, suspect that Massinger's experience thereof was but small: but the fact which is most noteworthy is this—that the 'Virgin Martyr' is actually one of the foulest plays known. Every pains has been taken to prove that the indecent scenes in the play were not written by Massinger, but by Dekker; on what grounds we know

not. If Dekker assisted Massinger in the play, as he is said to have done, we are aware of no canons of internal criticism which will enable us to decide, as boldly as Mr. Gifford does, that all the indecency is Dekker's, and all the poetry Massinger's. He confesses—as indeed he is forced to do—that 'Massinger himself is not free from dialogues of low wit and buffoonery;' and then, after calling the scenes in question 'detestable ribaldry,' 'a loathsome sooterkin, engendered of filth and dulness,' recommends them to the reader's supreme scorn and contempt,—with which feelings the reader will doubtless regard them: but he will also, if he be a thinking man, draw from them the following conclusions: that even if they be Dekker's—of which there is no proof—Massinger was forced, in order to the success of his play, to pander to the public taste, by allowing Dekker to interpolate these villanies; that the play which, above all others of the seventeenth century, contains the most supralunar rosepink of piety, devotion, and purity, also contains the stupidest abominations of any extant play; and lastly, that those who reprinted it as a sample of the Christianity of that past golden age of High-churchmanship, had to leave out one-third of the play, for fear of becoming amenable to the laws against abominable publications.

No one denies that there are nobler words than any that we have quoted, in Jonson, in Fletcher, or in Massinger: but there is hardly a play (perhaps none) of theirs in which the immoralities of which we complain do not exist,—few of which they do not form an integral

part; and now, if this is the judgment which we have to pass on the morality of the greater poets, what must the lesser ones be like?

Look, then, at Webster's two masterpieces, 'Vittoria Corrombona' and the 'Duchess of Malfi.' A few words spent on them will surely not be wasted; for they are pretty generally agreed to be the two best tragedies written since Shakspeare's time.

The whole story of 'Vittoria Corrombona' is one of sin and horror. The subject-matter of the play is altogether made up of the fiercest and the basest passions. But the play is not a study of those passions from which we may gain a great insight into human nature. There is no trace—nor is there, again, in the 'Duchess of Malfi'—of that development of human souls for good or evil, which is Shakspeare's especial power,—the power which, far more than any accidental 'beauties,' makes his plays, to this day, the delight alike of the simple and the wise, while his contemporaries are all but forgotten. The highest aim of dramatic art is to exhibit the development of the human soul; to construct dramas in which the conclusion shall depend, not on the events, but on the characters; and in which the characters shall not be mere embodiments of a certain passion, or a certain 'humour:' but persons, each unlike all others; each having a destiny of his own by virtue of his own peculiarities, and of his own will; and each proceeding toward that destiny as he shall conquer, or yield to, circumstances; unfolding his own strength and weakness before the eyes of the audience: and that in

such a way, that, after his first introduction, they should be able (in proportion to their knowledge of human nature) to predict his conduct under those circumstances. This is indeed 'high art:' but we find no more of it in Webster than in the rest. His characters, be they old or young, come on the stage ready-made, full grown, and stereotyped; and therefore, in general, they are not characters at all, but mere passions or humours in human form. Now and then he essays to draw a character: but it is analytically, by description, not synthetically and dramatically, by letting the man exhibit himself in action; and in the 'Duchess of Malfi' he falls into the great mistake of telling, by Antonio's mouth, more about the Duke and the Cardinal than he afterwards makes them act. Very different is Shakspeare's method of giving, at the outset, some single delicate hint about his personages, which will serve as a clue to their whole future conduct; thus 'showing the whole in each part,' and stamping each man with a personality, to a degree which no other dramatist has ever approached.

But the truth is, the study of human nature is not Webster's aim. He has to arouse terror and pity, not thought, and he does it in his own way, by blood and fury, madmen and screech-owls, not without a rugged power. There are scenes of his, certainly, like that of Vittoria's trial, which have been praised for their delineation of character: but it is one thing to solve the problem, which Shakspeare has so handled in 'Lear,' 'Othello,' and 'Richard the Third,'—'Given a mixed cha-

racter, to show how he may become criminal, and to solve Webster's 'Given a ready-made criminal, to show how he commits his crimes.' To us the knowledge of character shown in Vittoria's trial scene is not an insight into Vittoria's essential heart and brain, but a general acquaintance with the conduct of all bold bad women when brought to bay. Poor Elia, who knew the world from books, and human nature principally from his own loving and gentle heart, talks of Vittoria's 'innocence-resembling boldness'*—and 'seeming to see that matchless beauty of her face, which inspires such gay confidence in her,' and so forth.

Perfectly just and true, not of Vittoria merely, but of the average of bad young women in the presence of a police magistrate: yet amounting in all merely to this, that the strength of Webster's confest master-scene lies simply in intimate acquaintance with vicious nature in general. We will say no more on this matter; save to ask, Cui bono? Was the art of which this was the highest manifestation likely to be of much use to mankind, much less able to excuse its palpably disgusting and injurious accompaniments?

The 'Duchess of Malfi' is certainly in a purer and loftier strain: but in spite of the praise which has been lavished on her, we must take the liberty to doubt whether the poor Duchess is a 'person' at all. General

* C. Lamb, 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets,' p. 229. From which specimens, be it remembered, he has had to expunge not only all the comic scenes, but generally the greater part of the plot itself, to make the book at all tolerable.

goodness and beauty, intense though pure affection for a man below her in rank, and a will to carry out her purpose at all hazards, are not enough to distinguish her from thousands of other women: but Webster has no such purpose. What he was thinking and writing of was, not truth, but effect; not the Duchess, but her story; not her brothers, but their rage; not Antonio, her major-domo and husband, but his good and bad fortunes; and thus he has made Antonio merely insipid, the brothers merely unnatural, and the Duchess (in the critical moment of the play) merely forward. That curious scene, in which she acquaints Antonio with her love for him, and makes him marry her, is, on the whole, painful. Webster himself seems to have felt that it was so; and, dreading lest he had gone too far, to have tried to redeem the Duchess at the end by making her break down in two exquisite lines of loving shame: but he has utterly forgotten to explain or justify her love, by giving to Antonio (as Shakspeare would probably have done) such strong specialties of character as would compel, and therefore excuse, his mistress's affection. He has plenty of time to do this in the first scenes,—time which he wastes on irrelevant matter; and all that we gather from them is that Antonio is a worthy and thoughtful person. If he gives promise of being more, he utterly disappoints that promise afterwards. In the scene in which the Duchess tells her love, he is far smaller, rather than greater, than the Antonio of the opening scene: though (as there) altogether passive. He hears his mistress's declaration just

as any other respectable youth might; is exceedingly astonished, and a good deal frightened; has to be talked out of his fears till one naturally expects a revulsion on the Duchess's part into something like scorn or shame (which might have given a good opportunity for calling out sudden strength in Antonio): but so busy is Webster with his business of drawing mere blind love, that he leaves Antonio to be a mere puppet, whose worthiness we are to believe in only from the Duchess's assurance to him that he is the perfection of all that a man should be; which, as all lovers are of the same opinion the day before the wedding, is not of much importance.

Neither in his subsequent misfortunes does Antonio make the least struggle to prove himself worthy of his mistress's affection. He is very resigned, and loving, and so forth. To win renown by great deeds, and so prove his wife in the right to her brothers and all the world, never crosses his imagination. His highest aim (and that only at last) is slavishly to entreat pardon from his brothers-in-law, for the mere offence of marrying their sister; and he dies by an improbable accident, the same pious and respectable insipidity which he has lived,—'ne valant pas la peine qui se donne pour lui.' The prison-scenes between the Duchess and her tormentors are painful enough, if to give pain be a dramatic virtue; and she appears in them really noble; and might have appeared far more so, had Webster taken half as much pains with her as he has with the madmen, ruffians, ghosts, and screech-owls in which his

heart really delights. The only character really worked out, so as to live and grow under his hand, is Bosola, who, of course, is the villain of the piece, and being a rough fabric, is easily manufactured with rough tools. Still, Webster has his wonderful touches here and there,—

Cariola. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers! Alas!
What will you do with my lady? Call for help!
Duchess. To whom? to our next neighbours? they are mad folk.
Farewell, Cariola.
I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep.—Now, what you please;
What death?

And so the play ends, as does 'Vittoria Corrombona,' with half-a-dozen murders coram populo, howls, despair, bedlam and the shambles; putting the reader marvellously in mind of that well-known old book of the same era, 'Reynolds's God's Revenge,' in which, with all due pious horror and bombastic sermonizing, the national appetite for abominations is duly fed with some fifty unreadable Spanish histories, French histories, Italian histories, and so forth, one or two of which, of course, are known to have furnished subjects for the playwrights of the day.

The next play-writer whom we are bound to notice is James Shirley, one of the many converts to Romanism which those days saw. He appears, up to the breaking out of the Civil War, to have been the Queen's favourite poet; and, according to Langbaine, he was 'one of such incomparable parts, that he was the chief

of the second-rate poets, and by some has been thought even equal to Fletcher himself.'

We must entreat the reader's attention while we examine Shirley's 'Gamester.' Whether the examination be a pleasant business or not, it is somewhat important; 'for,' says Mr. Dyce, 'the following memorandum respecting it occurs in the office-book of the Master of the Records:—"On Thursday night, 6th of February, 1633, 'The Gamester' was acted at Court, made by Sherley out of a plot of the king's, given him by mee, and well likte. The king sayd it was the best play he had seen for seven years."'

This is, indeed, important. We shall now have an opportunity of fairly testing at the same time the taste of the Royal Martyr, and the average merit, at least in the opinion of the Caroline Court, of the dramatists of that day.

The plot which Charles sent to Shirley as a fit subject for his muse is taken from one of those collections of Italian novels of which we have already had occasion to speak, and occurs in the second part of the Ducento Novelle of Celio Malespini; and what it is we shall see forthwith.

The play opens with a scene between one Wilding and his ward Penelope, in which he attempts to seduce the young lady, in language which has certainly the merit of honesty. She refuses him, but civilly enough; and on her departure Mrs. Wilding enters, who, it seems, is the object of her husband's loathing, though young, handsome, and in all respects charming enough.

After a scene of stupid and brutal insults, he actually asks her to bring Penelope to him, at which she naturally goes out in anger; and Hazard, the gamester, enters,—a personage without a character, in any sense of the word. There is next some talk against duelling, sensible enough, which arises out of a bye-plot,—one Delamere having been wounded in a duel by one Beaumont, mortally as is supposed. This bye-plot runs through the play, giving an opportunity for bringing in a father of the usual playhouse type,—a Sir Richard Hurry, who is, of course, as stupid, covetous, proud, and tyrannical and unfeeling, as playhouse fathers were then bound to be: but it is a plot of the most commonplace form, turning on the stale trick of a man expecting to be hanged for killing some one who turns out after all to have recovered, and having no bearing whatsoever on the real plot, which is this,—Mrs. Wilding, in order to win back her husband's affections, persuades Penelope to seem to grant his suit; while Mrs. Wilding herself is in reality to supply her niece's place, and shame her husband into virtue. Wilding tells Hazard of the good fortune which he fancies is coming, in scenes of which one can only say, that if they are not written for the purpose of exciting the passions, it is hard to see why they were written at all. But, being with Hazard in a gambling-house, at the very hour at which he is to meet Penelope, and having had a run of bad luck, he borrows a hundred pounds of Hazard, stays at the table to recover his losses, and sends Hazard to supply his place with the supposed Penelope. A few hours before

Penelope and Hazard have met for the first time, and Penelope considers him, as she says to herself aside, 'a handsome gentleman.' He begins, of course, talking foully to her; and the lady, so far from being shocked at the freedom of her new acquaintance, pays him back in his own coin in such good earnest that she soon silences him in the battle of dirt-throwing. Of this sad scene, it is difficult to say whether it indicates a lower standard of purity and courtesy in the poet, in the audience who endured it, or in the society of which it was, of course, intended to be a brilliant picture. If the cavaliers and damsels of Charles the First's day were in the habit of talking in that way to each other (and if they had not been, Shirley would not have dared to represent them as doing so), one cannot much wonder that the fire of God was needed to burn up (though, alas! only for a while) such a state of society; and that when needed the fire fell.

The rest of the story is equally bad. Hazard next day gives Wilding descriptions of his guilt, and while Wilding is in the height of self-reproach at having handed over his victim to another, his wife meets him and informs him that she herself and not Penelope has been the victim. Now comes the crisis of the plot, the conception which so delighted the taste of the Royal Martyr. Wilding finds himself, as he expresses it, 'fitted with a pair of horns of his own making;' and his rage, shame, and base attempts to patch up his own dishonour by marrying Penelope to Hazard (even at the cost of disgorging the half of her portion, which he

had intended to embezzle), furnish amusement to the audience to the end of the play; at last, on Hazard and Penelope coming in married, Wilding is informed that he has been deceived, and that his wife is unstained, having arranged with Hazard to keep up the delusion, in order to frighten him into good behaviour; whereupon Mr. Wilding promises to be a good husband henceforth, and the play ends.

Throughout the whole of this farrago of improbable iniquity not a single personage has any mark of personal character, or even of any moral quality, save (in Mrs. Wilding's case) that of patience under injury. Hazard 'The Gamester' is chosen as the hero, for what reason it is impossible to say; he is a mere nonentity, doing nothing which may distinguish him from any other gamester and blackguard, save that he is, as we are told,

> A man careless
> Of wounds; and though he have not had the luck
> To kill so many as another, dares
> Fight with all them that have.

He, nevertheless, being in want of money, takes a hundred pounds from a foolish old city merchant (city merchants are always fools in the seventeenth century) to let his nephew, young Barnacle, give him a box on the ear in a tavern, and (after the young cit has been transformed into an intolerable bully by the fame so acquired) takes another hundred pounds from the repentant uncle for kicking the youth back into his native state of peaceful cowardice. With the exception of some

little humour in these scenes with young Barnacle, the whole play is thoroughly stupid. We look in vain for anything like a reflection, a sentiment, even a novel image. Its language, like its morality, is all but on a level with the laboured vulgarities of the 'Relapse' or the 'Provoked Wife,' save that (Shirley being a confessed copier of the great dramatists of the generation before him) there is enough of the manner of Fletcher and Ben Jonson kept up to hide, at first sight, the utter want of anything like their matter; and as one sickens at the rakish swagger and the artificial smartness of his coxcombs, one regrets the racy and unaffected blackguardism of the earlier poets' men.

This, forsooth, is the best comedy which Charles had heard for seven years, and the plot, which he himself furnished for the occasion, fitted to an English audience by a Romish convert.

And yet there is one dramatist of that fallen generation over whose memory one cannot but linger, fancying what he would have become, and wondering why so great a spirit was checked suddenly ere half developed, by a fever which carried him off, with several other Oxford worthies, in 1643, when he was at most thirty-two (and according to one account only twenty-eight) years old. Let which of the two dates be the true one, Cartwright must always rank among our wondrous youths, by the side of Prince Henry, the Admirable Crichton, and others, of whom one's only doubt is, whether they were not too wondrous, too precociously complete for future development. We find Dr. Fell,

some time Bishop of Oxford, saying that 'Cartwright was the utmost man could come to;' we read how his body was as handsome as his soul; how he was an expert linguist, not only in Greek and Latin, but in French and Italian, an excellent orator, admirable poet; how Aristotle was no less known to him than Cicero and Virgil, and his metaphysical lectures preferred to those of all his predecessors, the Bishop of Lincoln only excepted; and his sermons as much admired as his other composures; and how one fitly applied to him that saying of Aristotle concerning Œschron the poet, that 'he could not tell what Œschron could not do.' We find pages on pages of high-flown epitaphs and sonnets on him, in which the exceeding bad taste of his admirers makes one inclined to doubt the taste of him whom they so bedaub with praise; and certainly, in spite of all due admiration for the Crichton of Oxford, one is unable to endorse Mr. Jasper Mayne's opinion, that

> In thee Ben Jonson still held Shakspeare's style;

or that he possest

> Lucan's bold heights match'd to staid Virgil's care,
> Martial's quick salt, joined to Musæus' tongue.

This superabundance of eulogy, when we remember the men and the age from which it comes, tempts one to form such a conception of Cartwright as, indeed, the portrait prefixed to his works (ed. 1651) gives us; the offspring of an over-educated and pedantic age, highly stored with everything but strength and simplicity; one in whom genius has been rather shaped (perhaps

cramped) than developed: but genius was present, without a doubt, under whatsoever artificial trappings; and Ben Jonson spoke but truth when he said, 'My son Cartwright writes all like a man.' It is impossible to open a page of 'The Lady Errant,' 'The Royal Slave,' 'The Ordinary,' or 'Love's Convert,' without feeling at once that we have to do with a man of a very different stamp from any (Massinger perhaps alone excepted) who was writing between 1630 and 1640. The specific gravity of the poems, so to speak, is far greater than that of any of his contemporaries; everywhere is thought, fancy, force, varied learning. He is never weak or dull; though he fails often enough, is often enough wrong-headed, fantastical, affected, and has never laid bare the deeper arteries of humanity, for good or for evil. Neither is he altogether an original thinker; as one would expect, he has over-read himself: but then he has done so to good purpose. If he imitates, he generally equals. The table of fare in 'The Ordinary' smacks of Rabelais or Aristophanes: but then it is worthy of either; and if one cannot help suspecting that 'The Ordinary' never would have been written had not Ben Jonson written 'The Alchemist,' one confesses that Ben Jonson need not have been ashamed to have written the play himself: although the plot, as all Cartwright's are, is somewhat confused and inconsequent. If he be Platonically sentimental in 'Love's Convert,' his sentiment is of the noblest and purest; and the confest moral of the play is one which that age needed, if ever age on earth did.

'Tis the good man's office
To serve and reverence woman, as it is
The fire's to burn ; for as our souls consist
Of sense and reason, so do yours, more noble,
Of sense and love, which doth as easily calm
All your desires, as reason quiets ours. * * *
Love, then, doth work in you, what Reason doth
In us ; here only lies the difference,—
Ours wait the lingering steps of Age and Time ;
But the woman's soul is ripe when it is young ;
So that in us what we call learning, is
Divinity in you, whose operations,
Impatient of delay, do outstrip time.

For the sake of such words, in the midst of an evil and adulterous generation, we will love young Cartwright, in spite of the suspicion that, addressed as the play is to Charles, and probably acted before his queen, the young rogue had been playing the courtier somewhat, and racking his brains for pretty sayings which would exhibit as a virtue that very uxoriousness of the poor king, which at last cost him his head. The 'Royal Slave,' too, is a gallant play, right-hearted and lofty from beginning to end, though enacted in an impossible court-cloud-world, akin to that in which the classic heroes and heroines of Corneille and Racine call each other Monsieur and Madame.

As for his humour; he, alas! can be dirty like the rest, when necessary: but humour he has of the highest quality. 'The Ordinary' is full of it; and Moth, the Antiquary, though too much of a lay figure, and depending for his amusingness on his quaint antiquated language, is such a sketch as Mr. Dickens need not have been ashamed to draw.

The 'Royal Slave' seems to have been considered, both by the Court and by his contemporaries, his masterpiece. And justly so; yet our pleasure at Charles's having shown, for once, good taste, is somewhat marred by Langbaine's story, that the good acting of the Oxford scholars, 'stately scenes, and richness of the Persian habits,' had as much to do with the success of the play as its 'stately style,' and 'the excellency of the songs, which were set by that admirable composer, Mr. Henry James.' True it is, that the songs are excellent, as are all Cartwright's; for grace, simplicity, and sweetness, equal to any (save Shakspeare's) which the seventeenth century produced: but curiously enough, his lyric faculty seems to have exhausted itself in these half-dozen songs. His minor poems are utterly worthless, out-Cowleying Cowley in frigid and fantastic conceits; and his various addresses to the king and queen are as bombastic, and stupid, and artificial, as anything which bedizened the reigns of Charles II. or his brother.

Are we to gather from this fact that Cartwright was not really an original genius, but only a magnificent imitator; that he could write plays well, because others had written them well already, but only for that reason; and that for the same reason, when he attempted detached lyrics and addresses, he could only follow the abominable models which he saw around him? We know not; for surely in Jonson and Shakspeare's minor poems he might have found simpler and sweeter types; and even in those of Fletcher, who appears, from his own account, to have been his especial pattern. Shakspeare, however,

as we have seen, he looked down on; as did the rest of his generation.

Cartwright, as an Oxford scholar, is of course a worshipper of Charles, and a hater of Puritans. We do not wish to raise a prejudice against so young a man, by quoting any of the ridiculous, and often somewhat abject, rant with which he addresses their majesties, on their return from Scotland, on the queen's delivery, on the birth of the Duke of York, and so forth; for in that he did but copy the tone of grave divines and pious prelates: but he, unfortunately for his fame, is given (as young geniuses are sometimes) to prophecy; and two of his prophecies, at least, have hardly been fulfilled. He was somewhat mistaken, when, on the birth of the Duke of York, he informed the world that

> The state is now past fear; and all that we
> Need wish besides is perpetuity;

and after indulging in various explanations of the reason why 'Nature' showed no prodigies at the birth of the future patron of Judge Jeffreys, which, if he did not believe them, are lies, and if he did, are very like blasphemies, declares that the infant is

> A son of Mirth,
> Of Peace and Friendship; 'tis a quiet birth.

Nor, again, if spirits in the other world have knowledge of human affairs, can Mr. Cartwright be now altogether satisfied with his rogue's augury as to the capacities of the New England Puritans, when he intends to pick

pockets in the New World, having made the Old too hot to hold him—

> They are good silly people; souls that will
> Be cheated without trouble: one eye is
> Put out with zeal, th' other with ignorance,
> And yet they think they're eagles.

Whatsoever were the faults of the Pilgrim Fathers (and they were many), silliness was certainly not among them. But such was the Court fashion. Any insult, however shallow, ribald, and doggrel, (and all these terms are just of the mock-Puritan ballad which Sir Christopher sings in 'The Ordinary,' just after an epithalamium so graceful and melodious, though a little 'warm' in tone, as to be really out of place in such a fellow's mouth,) passes current against men who were abroad the founders of the United States, and the forefathers of the acutest and most enterprising nation on earth; and who at home proved themselves, by terrible fact, not only the physically stronger party, but the more cunning. But so it was fated to be. A deep mist of conceit, fed by the shallow breath of parasites, players, and pedants, wrapt that unhappy Court in blind security, till 'the breaking was as the swelling out of a high wall, which cometh suddenly in an instant.'

'But after all, what Poetry and Art there was in that day, good or bad, all belonged to the Royalists.'

All? There are those who think that, if mere concettism be a part of poetry, Quarles is as great a poet as Cowley or George Herbert, Vaughan or Withers. On

this question, and on the real worth of the seventeenth century lyrists, a great deal has to be said hereafter. Meanwhile, there are those, too, who believe John Bunyan, considered simply as an artist, to be the greatest dramatic author whom England has seen since Shakspeare; and there linger, too, in the libraries and the ears of men, words of one John Milton. He was no rigid hater of the beautiful, merely because it was heathen and Popish; no more, indeed, were many highly-educated and highly-born gentlemen of the Long Parliament: no more was Cromwell himself, whose delight was (if we may trust that double renegade Waller) to talk over with him the worthies of Rome and Greece, and who is said to have preserved for the nation Raphael's cartoons and Andrea Mantegna's triumph, when Charles's pictures were sold. But Milton had steeped his whole soul in romance. He had felt the beauty and glory of the chivalrous Middle Age as deeply as Shakspeare himself; he had as much classical lore as any Oxford pedant. He felt to his heart's core, (for he sang of it, and had he not felt it he would only have written of it,) the magnificence and worth of really high art, of the drama when it was worthy of man and of itself.

> Of gorgeous tragedy,
> Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line,
> Or the Tale of Troy divine,
> Or what, though rare, of later age,
> Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

No poet, perhaps, shows wider and truer sympathy with every form of the really beautiful in art, nature, and history: and yet he was a Puritan.

Yes, Milton was a Puritan; one, who instead of trusting himself, and his hopes of the universe, to second-hand hearsays, systems, and traditions, had looked God's Word and his own soul in the face, and determined to act on that which he had found. And therefore it is that to open his works at any stray page, after these effeminate Carolists, is like falling asleep in a stifling city drawing-room, amid Rococo French furniture, not without untidy traces of last night's ball, and awaking in an alpine valley, amid the scent of sweet cyclamens and pine boughs, to the music of trickling rivulets and shouting hunters, beneath the dark cathedral aisles of mighty trees, and here and there, above them and beyond, the spotless peaks of everlasting snow; while far beneath your feet—

> The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,
> Stretched to the amplest reach of prospect, lies.

Take any—the most hackneyed passage of 'Comus,' the 'Allegro,' the 'Penseroso,' the 'Paradise Lost,' and see the freshness, the sweetness, the simplicity, which is strangely combined with the pomp, the self-restraint, the earnestness of every word: take him even, as an experimentum crucis, when he trenches upon ground heathen and questionable, and tries the Court poets at their own weapons,—

> Or whether (as some sager sing),
> The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
> Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
> As he met her once a-Maying,
> There on beds of violets blue,
> And fresh-blown roses washed in dew——

but why quote what all the world knows?—where shall we find such real mirth, ease, sweetness, dance and song of words in anything written for five-and-twenty years before him? True, he was no great dramatist. He never tried to be one: but there was no one in his generation who could have written either 'Comus' or 'Samson Agonistes.' And if, as is commonly believed, and as his countenance seems to indicate, he was deficient in humour, so were his contemporaries, with the sole exception of Cartwright. Witty he could be, and bitter: but he did not live in a really humorous age: and if he has none of the rollicking fun of the foxhound puppy, at least he has none of the obscene gibber of the ape.

After all, the great fact stands, that the only lasting poet of that generation was a Puritan; one who, if he did not write dramas in sport, at least acted dramas in earnest. For drama means etymologically, action and doing: and of the drama there are, and always will be, two kinds: one the representative, the other the actual; and for a world wherein there is no superabundance of good deeds, the latter will be always the better kind. It is good to represent heroical action in verse, and on the stage: it is good to 'purify,' as old Aristotle has it, 'the affections by pity and terror.' There is an ideal tragedy, and an ideal comedy also, which one can imagine as an integral part of the highest Christian civilization. But when 'Christian' tragedy sinks below the standard of heathen Greek tragedy; when, instead of setting forth heroical deeds, it teaches the audience new possibilities of crime, and new excuses for those crimes; when,

instead of purifying the affections by pity and terror, it confounds the moral sense by exciting pity and terror merely for the sake of excitement, careless whether they be well or ill directed: then it is of the devil, and the sooner it returns to its father the better for mankind! When, again, comedy, instead of stirring a divine scorn of baseness, or even a kindly and indulgent smile at the weaknesses and oddities of humanity, learns to make a mock of sin,—to find excuses for the popular frailties which it pretends to expose,—then it also is of the devil, and to the devil let it go; while honest and earnest men, who have no such exceeding love of 'Art' that they must needs have bad art rather than none at all, do the duty which lies nearest them amid clean whitewash and honest prose. The whole theory of 'Art, its dignity and vocation,' seems to us at times questionable, if coarse facts are to be allowed to weigh, (as we suppose they are,) against delicate theories. If we are to judge by the example of Italy, the country which has been most of all devoted to the practice of 'Art,' then a nation is not necessarily free, strong, moral, or happy because it can 'represent' facts, or can understand how other people have represented them. We do not hesitate to go farther, and to say, that the now past weakness of Germany was to be traced in a great degree to that pernicious habit of mind which made her educated men fancy it enough to represent noble thoughts and feelings, or to analyse the representations of them: while they did not bestir themselves, or dream that there was a moral need for bestirring themselves, toward putting these thoughts and feelings

into practice. Goethe herein was indeed the type of a very large class of Germans: God grant that no generation may ever see such a type common in England; and that our race, remembering ever that the golden age of the English drama was one of private immorality, public hypocrisy, ecclesiastical pedantry, and regal tyranny, and ended in the temporary downfall of Church and Crown, may be more ready to do fine things than to write fine books; and act in their lives, as those old Puritans did, a drama which their descendants may be glad to put on paper for them long after they are dead.

For surely these Puritans were dramatic enough, poetic enough, picturesque enough. We do not speak of such fanatics as Balfour of Burley, or any other extravagant person whom it may have suited Walter Scott to take as a typical personage. We speak of the average Puritan nobleman, gentleman, merchant, or farmer; and hold him to have been a picturesque and poetical man,—a man of higher imagination and deeper feeling than the average of court poets; and a man of sound taste also. What is to be said for his opinions about the stage has been seen already: but it seems to have escaped most persons' notice, that either all England is grown very foolish, or the Puritan opinions on several matters have been justified by time.

On the matter of the stage, the world has certainly come ever to their way of thinking. Few highly educated men now think it worth while to go to see any play, and that exactly for the same reasons as the Puritans put forward; and still fewer highly educated men think it worth

while to write plays: finding that since the grosser excitements of the imagination have become forbidden themes, there is really very little to write about.

But in the matter of dress and of manners, the Puritan triumph has been complete. Even their worst enemies have come over to their side, and the 'whirligig of time has brought about its revenge.'

Most of their canons of taste have become those of all England. High Churchmen, who still call them Roundheads and Cropped-ears, go about rounder-headed and closer cropt than they ever went. They held it more rational to cut the hair to a comfortable length than to wear effeminate curls down the back. We cut ours much shorter than they ever did. They held (with the Spaniards, then the finest gentlemen in the world,) that sad, i.e. dark colours, above all black, were the fittest for all stately and earnest gentlemen. We all, from the Tractarian to the Anythingarian, are exactly of the same opinion. They held that lace, perfumes, and jewellery on a man were marks of unmanly foppishness and vanity. So hold the finest gentlemen in England now. They thought it equally absurd and sinful for a man to carry his income on his back, and bedizen himself out in reds, blues, and greens, ribbons, knots, slashes, and 'treble quadruple dædalian ruffs, built up on iron and timber, which have more arches in them for pride than London Bridge for use.' We, if we met such a ruffed and ruffled worthy as used to swagger by dozens up and down Paul's Walk, not knowing how to get a dinner, much less to pay his tailor, should look on him

as firstly a fool, and secondly a swindler: while if we met an old Puritan, we should consider him a man gracefully and picturesquely drest, but withal in the most perfect sobriety of good taste; and when we discovered (as we probably should), over and above, that the harlequin cavalier had a box of salve and a pair of dice in one pocket, a pack of cards and a few pawnbroker's duplicates in the other; that his thoughts were altogether of citizens' wives and their too easy virtue; and that he could not open his mouth without a dozen oaths: then we should consider the Puritan (even though he did quote Scripture somewhat through his nose) as the gentleman; and the courtier as a most offensive specimen of the 'snob triumphant,' glorying in his shame. The picture is not ours, nor even the Puritan's. It is Bishop Hall's, Bishop Earle's, it is Beaumont's, Fletcher's, Jonson's, Shakspeare's,—the picture which every dramatist, as well as satirist, has drawn of the 'gallant' of the seventeenth century. No one can read those writers honestly without seeing that the Puritan, and not the Cavalier conception of what a British gentleman should be, is the one accepted by the whole nation at this day.

In applying the same canon to the dress of women, they were wrong. As in other matters, they had hold of one pole of a double truth, and erred in applying it exclusively to all cases. But there are two things to be said for them; first, that the dress of that day was palpably an incentive to the profligacy of that day, and therefore had to be protested against; while in these

more moral times, ornaments and fashions may be harmlessly used which then could not be used without harm. Next, it is undeniable that sober dressing is more and more becoming the fashion among well-bred women; and that among them, too, the Puritan canons are gaining ground.

We have just said that the Puritans held too exclusively to one pole of a double truth. They did so, no doubt, in their hatred of the drama. Their belief that human relations were, if not exactly sinful, at least altogether carnal and unspiritual, prevented their conceiving the possibility of any truly Christian drama; and led them at times into strange and sad errors, like that New England ukase of Cotton Mather's, who is said to have punished the woman who should kiss her infant on the Sabbath day. Yet their extravagances on this point were but the honest revulsion from other extravagances on the opposite side. If the undistinguishing and immoral Autotheism of the playwrights, and the luxury and heathendom of the higher classes, first in Italy and then in England, were the natural revolt of the human mind against the Manichæism of monkery: then the severity and exclusiveness of Puritanism was a natural and necessary revolt against that luxury and immorality; a protest for man's God-given superiority over nature, against that Naturalism which threatened to end in sheer animalism. While Italian prelates have found an apologist in Mr. Roscoe, and English playwrights in Mr. Gifford, the old Puritans, who felt and asserted, however extravagantly, that there

was an eternal law which was above all Borgias and Machiavels, Stuarts and Fletchers, have surely a right to a fair trial. If they went too far in their contempt for humanity, certainly no one interfered to set them right. The Anglicans of that time, who held intrinsically the same anthropologic notions, and yet wanted the courage and sincerity to carry them out as honestly, neither could nor would throw any light upon the controversy; and the only class who sided with the poor playwrights in asserting that there were more things in man, and more excuses for man, than were dreamt of in Prynne's philosophy, were the Jesuit Casuists, who, by a fatal perverseness, used all their little knowledge human nature to the same undesirable purpose as the playwrights; namely, to prove how it was possible to commit every conceivable sinful action without sinning. No wonder that in an age in which courtiers and theatre-haunters were turning Romanists by the dozen, and the priest-ridden Queen was the chief patroness of the theatre, the Puritans should have classed players and Jesuits in the same category, and deduced the parentage of both alike from the father of lies.

But as for these Puritans having been merely the sour, narrow, inhuman persons they are vulgarly supposed to have been, credat Judæus. There were sour and narrow men among them; so there were in the opposite party. No Puritan could have had less poetry in him, less taste, less feeling, than Laud himself. But is there no poetry save words? No drama save that which is presented on the stage? Is this glorious earth,

and the souls of living men, mere prose, as long as 'carent vate sacro,' who will, forsooth, do them the honour to make poetry out of a little of them (and of how little!) by translating them into words, which he himself, just in proportion as he is a good poet, will confess to be clumsy, tawdry, ineffectual? Was there no poetry in these Puritans, because they wrote no poetry? We do not mean now the unwritten tragedy of the battle-psalm and the charge; but simple idyllic poetry and quiet home-drama, love-poetry of the heart and the hearth, and the beauties of every-day human life? Take the most commonplace of them: was Zeal-for-Truth Thoresby, of Thoresby Rise in Deeping Fen, because his father had thought fit to give him an ugly and silly name, the less of a noble lad? Did his name prevent his being six feet high? Were his shoulders the less broad for it, his cheeks the less ruddy for it? He wore his flaxen hair of the same length that every one now wears theirs, instead of letting it hang half-way to his waist in essenced curls; but was he therefore the less of a true Viking's son, bold-hearted as his sea-roving ancestors who won the Danelagh by Canute's side, and settled there on Thoresby Rise, to grow wheat and breed horses, generation succeeding generation, in the old moated grange? He carried a Bible in his jack-boot: but did that prevent him, as Oliver rode past him with an approving smile on Naseby-field, thinking himself a very handsome fellow, with his mustache and imperial, and bright red coat, and cuirass well polished, in spite of many a dint, as he sate his

father's great black horse as gracefully and firmly as any long-locked and essenced cavalier in front of him? Or did it prevent him thinking too, for a moment, with a throb of the heart, that sweet Cousin Patience far away at home, could she but see him, might have the same opinion of him as he had of himself? Was he the worse for the thought? He was certainly not the worse for checking it the next instant, with manly shame for letting such 'carnal vanities' rise in his heart, while he was 'doing the Lord's work' in the teeth of death and hell: but was there no poetry in him then? No poetry in him, five minutes after, as the long rapier swung round his head, redder and redder at every sweep? We are befooled by names. Call him Crusader instead of Roundhead, and he seems at once (granting him only sincerity, which he had, and that of a right awful kind) as complete a knight-errant as ever watched and prayed, ere putting on his spurs, in fantastic Gothic chapel, beneath 'storied windows richly dight.' Was there no poetry in him, either, half an hour afterwards, as he lay bleeding across the corpse of the gallant horse, waiting for his turn with the surgeon, and fumbled for the Bible in his boot, and tried to hum a psalm, and thought of Cousin Patience, and his father, and his mother, and how they would hear, at least, that he had played the man in Israel that day, and resisted unto blood, striving against sin and the Man of Sin?

And was there no poetry in him, too, as he came wearied along Thoresby dyke, in the quiet autumn eve, home to the house of his forefathers, and saw

afar off the knot of tall poplars rising over the broad misty flat, and the one great abele tossing its sheets of silver in the dying gusts; and knew that they stood before his father's door? Who can tell all the pretty child-memories which flitted across his brain at that sight, and made him forget that he was a wounded cripple? There is the dyke where he and his brothers snared the great pike which stole the ducklings—how many years ago?—while pretty little Patience stood by trembling, and shrieked at each snap of the brute's wide jaws; and there, down that long dark lode, ruffling with crimson in the sunset breeze, he and his brothers skated home in triumph with Patience when his uncle died. What a day that was! when, in the clear bright winter noon, they laid the gate upon the ice, and tied the beef-bones under the four corners, and packed little Patience on it.—How pretty she looked, though her eyes were red with weeping, as she peeped out from among the heap of blankets and horse-hides; and how merrily their long fen-runners whistled along the ice-lane, between the high banks of sighing reed, as they towed home their new treasure in triumph, at a pace like the race-horse's, to the dear old home among the poplar-trees. And now he was going home, to meet her, after a mighty victory, a deliverance from heaven, second only in his eyes to that Red-sea one. Was there no poetry in his heart at that thought? Did not the glowing sunset, and the reed-beds which it transfigured before him into sheets of golden flame,

seem tokens that the glory of God was going before him in his path? Did not the sweet clamour of the wild-fowl, gathering for one rich pæan ere they sank into rest, seem to him as God's bells chiming him home in triumph, with peals sweeter and bolder than those of Lincoln or Peterborough steeple-house? Did not the very lapwing, as she tumbled, softly wailing, before him, as she did years ago, seem to welcome the wanderer home in the name of heaven?

Fair Patience, too, though she was a Puritan; yet did not her cheek flush, her eye grow dim, like any other girl's, as she saw far off the red-coat, like a sliding spark of fire, coming slowly along the strait fen-bank, and fled up stairs into her chamber to pray, half that it might be, half that it might not be he? Was there no happy storm of human tears and human laughter when he entered the courtyard gate? Did not the old dog lick his Puritan hand as lovingly as if it had been a Cavalier's? Did not lads and lasses run out shouting? Did not the old yeoman father hug him, weep over him, hold him at arm's length, and hug him again, as heartily as any other John Bull, even though the next moment he called all to kneel down and thank Him who had sent his boy home again, after bestowing on him the grace to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron, and contend to death for the faith delivered to the saints? And did not Zeal-for-Truth look about as wistfully for Patience as any other man would have done, longing to see her, yet not daring even to ask

for her? And when she came down at last, was she the less lovely in his eyes because she came, not flaunting with bare bosom, in tawdry finery and paint, but shrouded close in coif and pinner, hiding from all the world beauty which was there still, but was meant for one alone, and that only if God willed, in God's good time? And was there no faltering of their voices, no light in their eyes, no trembling pressure of their hands, which said more, and was more, ay, and more beautiful in the sight of Him who made them, than all Herrick's Dianemes, Waller's Saccharissas, flames, darts, posies, love-knots, anagrams, and the rest of the insincere cant of the court? What if Zeal-for-Truth had never strung two rhymes together in his life? Did not his heart go for inspiration to a loftier Helicon, when it whispered to itself, 'My love, my dove, my undefiled, is but one,' than if he had filled pages with sonnets about Venuses and Cupids, love-sick shepherds and cruel nymphs?

And was there no poetry, true idyllic poetry, as of Longfellow's 'Evangeline' itself, in that trip round the old farm next morning; when Zeal-for-Truth, after looking over every heifer, and peeping into every sty, would needs canter down by his father's side to the horse-fen, with his arm in a sling; while the partridges whirred up before them, and the lurchers flashed like grey snakes after the hare, and the colts came whinnying round, with staring eyes and streaming manes; and the two chatted on in the same sober businesslike English tone, alternately of 'The Lord's great deal-

ings' by General Cromwell, the pride of all honest fen-men, and the price of troop-horses at the next Horncastle fair?

Poetry in those old Puritans? Why not? They were men of like passions with ourselves. They loved, they married, they brought up children; they feared, they sinned, they sorrowed, they fought—they conquered. There was poetry enough in them, be sure, though they acted it like men, instead of singing it like birds.

II.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND HIS TIME.

II.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND HIS TIME.[1]

'TRUTH is stranger than fiction.' A trite remark. We all say it, again and again: but how few of us believe it! How few of us, when we read the history of heroical times and heroical men, take the story simply as it stands! On the contrary, we try to explain it away; to prove it all not to have been so very wonderful: to impute accident, circumstance, mean and commonplace motives; to lower every story down to the level of our own littleness, or what we (unjustly to ourselves, and to the God who is near us all) choose to consider our level; to rationalize away all the wonders, till we make them at last impossible, and give up caring to believe them; and prove to our own melancholy satisfaction that Alexander conquered the world with a pin, in his sleep, by accident.

* North British Review. No. XLV.—1. 'Life of Sir Walter Raleigh.' By P. Fraser Tytler, F.R.S. London, 1853.—2. 'Raleigh's Discovery of Guiana.' Edited by Sir Robert Schomburgk (Hakluyt Society), 1848.—3. 'Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh.' By M. Napier. Cambridge, 1853.—4. 'Raleigh's Works, with Lives by Oldys and Birch.' Oxford, 1829.—5. 'Bishop Goodman's History of his own Times.' London, 1839.

And yet in this mood, as in most, there is a sort of left-handed truth involved. These heroes are not so far removed from us, after all. They were men of like passions with ourselves, with the same flesh about them, the same spirit within them, the same world outside, the same devil beneath, the same God above. They and their deeds were not so very wonderful. Every child who is born into the world is just as wonderful; and, for ought we know, might, mutatis mutandis, do just as wonderful deeds. If accident and circumstance helped them, the same may help us: have helped us, if we will look back down our years, far more than we have made use of.

They were men, certainly, very much of our own level: but may we not put that level somewhat too low? They were certainly not what we are; for if they had been, they would have done no more than we: but is not a man's real level not what he is, but what he can be, and therefore ought to be? No doubt they were compact of good and evil, just as we: but so was David, no man more; though a more heroical personage (save One) appears not in all human records: but may not the secret of their success have been, that, on the whole (though they found it a sore battle), they refused the evil and chose the good? It is true, again, that their great deeds may be more or less explained, attributed to laws, rationalized: but is explaining always explaining away? Is it to degrade a thing to attribute it to a a law? And do you do anything more by 'rationalizing' men's deeds than prove that they were rational men;

men who saw certain fixed laws, and obeyed them, and succeeded thereby, according to the Baconian apophthegm, that nature is conquered by obeying her?

But what laws?

To that question, perhaps, the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews will give the best answer, where it says, that by faith were done all the truly great deeds, and by faith lived all the truly great men, who have ever appeared on earth.

There are, of course, higher and lower degrees of this faith; its object is one more or less worthy: but it is in all cases the belief in certain unseen eternal facts, by keeping true to which a man must in the long run succeed. Must; because he is more or less in harmony with heaven, and earth, and the Maker thereof, and has therefore fighting on his side a great portion of the universe; perhaps the whole; for as he who breaks one commandment of the law is guilty of the whole, because he denies the fount of all law, so he who with his whole soul keeps one commandment of it is likely to be in harmony with the whole, because he testifies of the fount of all law.

I shall devote a few pages to the story of an old hero, of a man of like passions with ourselves; of one who had the most intense and awful sense of the unseen laws, and succeeded mightily thereby; of one who had hard struggles with a flesh and blood which made him at times forget those laws, and failed mightily thereby: of one whom God so loved that He caused each slightest sin, as with David, to bring its own

punishment with it, that while the flesh was delivered over to Satan, the man himself might be saved in the Day of the Lord; of one, finally, of whom nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand may say, 'I have done worse deeds than he: but I have never done as good ones.'

In a poor farm-house among the pleasant valleys of South Devon, among the white apple-orchards and the rich water-meadows, and the red fallows and red kine, in the year of grace 1552, a boy was born, as beautiful as day, and christened Walter Raleigh. His father was a gentleman of ancient blood: few older in the land: but, impoverished, he had settled down upon the wreck of his estate, in that poor farm-house. No record of him now remains; but he must have been a man worth knowing and worth loving, or he would not have won the wife he did. She was a Champernoun, proudest of Norman squires, and could probably boast of having in her veins the blood of Courtneys, Emperors of Byzant. She had been the wife of the famous knight Sir Otho Gilbert, and lady of Compton Castle, and had borne him three brave sons, John, Humphrey, and Adrian; all three destined to win knighthood also in due time, and the two latter already giving promises, which they well fulfilled, of becoming most remarkable men of their time. And yet the fair Champernoun, at her husband's death, had chosen to wed Mr. Raleigh, and share life with him in the little farm-house at Hayes. She must have been a grand woman, if the law holds true that great men always have great

mothers; an especially grand woman, indeed; for few can boast of having borne to two different husbands such sons as she bore. No record, as far as we know, remains of her; nor of her boy's early years. One can imagine them, nevertheless.

Just as he awakes to consciousness, the Smithfield fires are extinguished. He can recollect, perhaps, hearing of the burning of the Exeter martyrs: and he does not forget it; no one forgot or dared forget it in those days. He is brought up in the simple and manly, yet high-bred ways of English gentlemen in the times of 'an old courtier of the Queen's.' His two elder half-brothers also, living some thirty miles away, in the quaint and gloomy towers of Compton Cast., amid the apple-orchards of Torbay, are men as noble as ever formed a young lad's taste. Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert, who afterwards, both of them, rise to knighthood, are—what are they not?—soldiers, scholars, Christians, discoverers and 'planters' of foreign lands, geographers, alchemists, miners, Platonical philosophers; many-sided, high-minded men, not without fantastic enthusiasm; living heroic lives, and destined, one of them, to die a heroic death. From them Raleigh's fancy has been fired, and his appetite for learning quickened, while he is yet a daring boy, fishing in the grey trout-brooks, or going up with his father to the Dartmoor hills to hunt the deer with hound and horn, amid the wooded gorges of Holne, or over the dreary downs of Hartland Warren, and the cloud-capt thickets of Cator's Beam, and looking down from thence

upon the far blue southern sea, wondering when he shall sail thereon, to fight the Spaniard, and discover, like Columbus, some fairy-land of gold and gems.

For before this boy's mind, as before all intense English minds of that day, rise, from the first, three fixed ideas, which yet are but one—the Pope, the Spaniard, and America.

The two first are the sworn and internecine enemies (whether they pretend a formal peace or not) of Law and Freedom, Bible and Queen, and all that makes an Englishman's life dear to him. Are they not the incarnations of Antichrist? Their Moloch sacrifices flame through all lands. The earth groans because of them, and refuses to cover the blood of her slain. And America is the new world of boundless wonder and beauty, wealth and fertility, to which these two evil powers arrogate an exclusive and divine right; and God has delivered it into their hands; and they have done evil therein with all their might, till the story of their greed and cruelty rings through all earth and heaven. Is this the will of God? Will he not avenge for these things, as surely as he is the Lord who executeth justice and judgment in the earth?

These are the young boy's thoughts. These were his thoughts for sixty-six eventful years. In whatsoever else he wavered, he never wavered in that creed. He learnt it in his boyhood, while he read Fox's Martyrs beside his mother's knee. He learnt it as a lad, when he saw his neighbours Hawkins and Drake changed by Spanish tyranny and treachery from peaceful merchant-

men into fierce scourges of God. He learnt it scholastically, from fathers and divines, as an Oxford scholar, in days when Oxford was a Protestant indeed, in whom there was no guile. He learnt it when he went over, at seventeen years old, with his gallant kinsman Henry Champernoun, and his band of 100 gentlemen volunteers, to flesh his maiden sword in behalf of the persecuted French Protestants. He learnt it as he listened to the shrieks of the San Bartholomew; he learnt it as he watched the dragonnades, the tortures, the massacres of the Netherlands, and fought manfully under Norris in behalf of those victims of 'the Pope and Spain.' He preached it in far stronger and wiser words than I can express it for him, in that noble tract of 1591, on Sir Richard Grenville's death at the Azores—a Tyrtæan trumpet-blast such as has seldom rung in human ears; he discussed it like a cool statesman in his pamphlet of 1596, on 'A War with Spain.' He sacrificed for it the last hopes of his old age, the wreck of his fortunes, his just recovered liberty; and he died with the old God's battle-cry upon his lips, when it awoke no response from the hearts of a coward, profligate, and unbelieving generation. This is the background, the key-note of the man's whole life. If we lose the recollection of it, and content ourselves by slurring it over in the last pages of his biography with some half-sneer about his putting, like the rest of Elizabeth's old admirals, 'the Spaniard, the Pope, and the Devil' in the same category, then we shall understand very little about Raleigh; though, of course, we shall save ourselves the trouble of

pronouncing as to whether the Spaniard and the Pope were really in the same category as the devil; or, indeed, which might be equally puzzling to a good many historians of the last century and a half, whether there be any devil at all.

The books which I have chosen to head this review are all of them more or less good, with one exception, and that is Bishop Goodman's Memoirs, on which much stress has been lately laid, as throwing light on various passages of Raleigh, Essex, Cecil, and James's lives. Having read it carefully, I must say plainly, that I think the book an altogether foolish, pedantic, and untrustworthy book, without any power of insight or gleam of reason; without even the care to be self-consistent; having but one object, the whitewashing of James, and of every noble lord whom the bishop has ever known: but in whitewashing each, the poor old flunkey so bespatters all the rest of his pets, that when the work is done, the whole party look, if possible, rather dirtier than before. And so I leave Bishop Goodman.

Mr. Fraser Tytler's book is well known; and it is on the whole a good one; because he really loves and admires the man of whom he writes: but he is sometimes careless as to authorities, and too often makes the wish father to the thought. Moreover, he has the usual sentiment about Mary Queen of Scots, and the usual scandal about Elizabeth, which is simply anathema; and which prevents his really seeing the time in which Raleigh lived, and the

element in which he moved. This sort of talk is happily dying out just now; but no one can approach the history of the Elizabethan age (perhaps of any age) without finding that truth is all but buried under mountains of dirt and chaff—an Augæan stable, which, perhaps, will never be swept clean. Yet I have seen, with great delight, several attempts toward removal of the said superstratum of dirt and chaff from the Elizabethan histories, in several articles, all evidently from the same pen (and that one, more perfectly master of English prose than any man living), in the 'Westminster Review' and 'Fraser's Magazine.'*

Sir Robert Schomburgk's edition of the Guiana Voyage contains an excellent Life of Raleigh, perhaps the best yet written; of which I only complain, when it gives in to the stock-charges against Raleigh, as it were at second-hand, and just because they are stock-charges, and when, too, the illustrious editor (unable to conceal his admiration of a discoverer in many points so like himself), takes all through an apologetic tone of 'Please don't laugh at me. I daresay it is very foolish; but I can't help loving the man.'

Mr. Napier's little book is a reprint of two 'Edinburgh Review' articles on Bacon and Raleigh. The first, a learned statement of facts in answer to some

* I especially entreat readers' attention to two articles in vindication of the morals of Queen Elizabeth, in 'Fraser's Magazine' of 1854; to one in the 'Westminster' of 1854, on Mary Stuart; and one in the same of 1852, on England's Forgotten Worthies, by a pen now happily well known in English literature, Mr. Anthony Froude's.

unwisdom of a Quarterly reviewer (possibly an Oxford Aristotelian; for 'we think we do know that sweet Roman hand'). It is clear, accurate, convincing, complete. There is no more to be said about the matter, save that facts are stubborn things.

The article on Raleigh is very valuable; first, because Mr. Napier has had access to many documents unknown to former biographers; and, next, because he clears Raleigh completely from the old imputation of deceit about the Guiana mine, as well as of other miner charges. With his general opinion of Raleigh's last and fatal Guiana voyage, I have the misfortune to differ from him toto cœlo, on the strength of the very documents which he quotes. But Mr. Napier is always careful, always temperate, and always just, except where he, as I think, does not enter into the feelings of the man whom he is analysing. Let readers buy the book (it will tell them a hundred things they do not know) and be judge between Mr. Napier and me.

In the meanwhile, one cannot help watching with a smile how good old Time's scrubbing-brush, which clears away paint and whitewash from church pillars, does the same by such characters as Raleigh's. After each fresh examination, some fresh count in the hundred-headed indictment breaks down. The truth is, that as people begin to believe more in nobleness, and to gird up their loins to the doing of noble deeds, they discover more nobleness in others. Raleigh's character was in its lowest nadir in the days of

Voltaire and Hume. What shame to him? For so were more sacred characters than his. Shall the disciple be above his master? especially when that disciple was but too inconsistent, and gave occasion to the uncircumcised to blaspheme? But Cayley, after a few years, refutes triumphantly Hume's silly slanders. He is a stupid writer: but he has sense enough, being patient, honest, and loving, to do that.

Mr. Fraser Tytler shovels away a little more of the dirt-heap; Mr. Napier clears him (for which we owe him many thanks), by simple statement of facts, from the charge of having deserted and neglected his Virginia colonists; Humboldt and Schomburgk clear him from the charge of having lied about Guiana; and so on; each successive writer giving in generally on merest hearsay to the general complaint against him, either from fear of running counter to big names, or from mere laziness, and yet absolving him from that particular charge of which his own knowledge enables him to judge. In the trust that I may be able to clear him from a few more charges, I write these pages, premising that I do not profess to have access to any new and recondite documents. I merely take the broad facts of the story from documents open to all; and comment on them as every man should wish his own life to be commented on.

But I do so on a method which I cannot give up; and that is the Bible method. I say boldly, that historians have hitherto failed in understanding not only Raleigh and Elizabeth, but nine-tenths of the

persons and facts in his day, because they will not judge them by the canons which the Bible lays down—by which I mean not only the New Testament but the Old, which, as English Churchmen say, and Scotch Presbyterians have ere now testified with sacred blood, is 'not contrary to the New.'

Mr. Napier has a passage about Raleigh for which I am sorry, coming as it does from a countryman of John Knox. 'Society, it would seem, was yet in a state in which such a man could seriously plead, that the madness he feigned was justified' (his last word is unfair, for Raleigh only hopes that it is no sin) 'by the example of David, King of Israel.' What a shocking state of society when men actually believed their Bibles, not too little, but too much. For my part, I think that if poor dear Raleigh had considered the example of David a little more closely, he need never have feigned madness at all; and that his error lay quite in an opposite direction from looking on the Bible heroes, David especially, as too sure models. At all events, let us try Raleigh by the very scriptural standard which he himself lays down, not merely in this case unwisely, but in his 'History of the World' more wisely than any historian whom I have ever read; and say, 'Judged as the Bible taught our Puritan forefathers to judge every man, the character is intelligible enough; tragic, but noble and triumphant: judged as men have been judged in history for the last hundred years, by hardly any canon save those of the private judgment, which philo-

sophic cant, maudlin sentimentality, or fear of public opinion, may happen to have forged; the man is a phenomenon, only less confused, abnormal, suspicious than his biographers' notions about him.' Again I say, I have not solved the problem: but it will be enough if I make some think it both soluble and worth solving. Let us look round, then, and see into what sort of a country, into what sort of a world, the young adventurer is going forth, at seventeen years of age, to seek his fortune.

Born in 1552, his young life has sprung up and grown with the young life of England. The earliest fact, perhaps, which he can recollect, is the flash of joy on every face which proclaims that Mary Tudor is dead, and Elizabeth reigns at last. As he grows, the young man sees all the hope and adoration of the English people centre in that wondrous maid, and his own centre in her likewise. He had been base had he been otherwise. She comes to the throne with such a prestige as never sovereign came since the days when Isaiah sang his pæan over young Hezekiah's accession. Young, learned, witty, beautiful (as with such a father and mother she could not help being), with an expression of countenance remarkable (I speak of those early days) rather for its tenderness and intellectual depth than its strength, she comes forward as the Champion of the Reformed Faith, the interpretress of the will and conscience of the people of England—herself persecuted all but to the death, and purified by affliction, like gold tried in the fire. She

gathers round her, one by one, young men of promise, and trains them herself to their work. And they fulfil it, and serve her, and grow grey-headed in her service, working as faithfully, as righteously, as patriotically, as men ever worked on earth. They are her 'favourites;' because they are men who deserve favour; men who count not their own lives dear to themselves for the sake of the queen and of that commonweal which their hearts and reasons tell them is one with her. They are still men, though; and some of them have their grudgings and envyings against each other: she keeps the balance even between them, on the whole, skilfully, gently, justly, in spite of weaknesses and prejudices, without which she had been more than human. Some have their conceited hopes of marrying her, becoming her masters. She rebukes and pardons. 'Out of the dust I took you, sir! go and do your duty, humbly and rationally, henceforth, or into the dust I trample you again!' And they reconsider themselves, and obey. But many, or most of them, are new men, country gentlemen, and younger sons. She will follow her father's plan, of keeping down the overgrown feudal princes, who, though brought low by the wars of the Roses, are still strong enough to throw everything into confusion by resisting at once the Crown and Commons. Proud nobles reply by rebellion, come down southwards with ignorant Popish henchmen at their backs; will restore Popery, marry the Queen of Scots, make the middle class and the majority submit to the feudal lords and

the minority. Elizabeth, with her 'aristocracy of genius,' is too strong for them: the people's heart is with her, and not with dukes. Each mine only blows up its diggers; and there are many dry eyes at their ruin. Her people ask her to marry. She answers gently, proudly, eloquently: 'She is married—the people of England is her husband. She has vowed it.' And yet there is a tone of sadness in that great speech. Her woman's heart yearns after love, after children; after a strong bosom on which to repose that weary head. More than once she is ready to give way. But she knows that it must not be. She has her reward. 'Whosoever gives up husband or child for my sake and the gospel's, shall receive them back a hundredfold in this present life,' as Elizabeth does. Her reward is an adoration from high and low, which is to us now inexplicable, impossible, overstrained, which was not so then.

For the whole nation is in a mood of exaltation; England is fairyland; the times are the last days—strange, terrible, and glorious. At home are Jesuits plotting; dark, crooked-pathed, going up and down in all manner of disguises, doing the devil's work if men ever did it; trying to sow discord between man and man, class and class; putting out books full of filthy calumnies, declaring the queen illegitimate, excommunicate, a usurper; English law null, and all state appointments void, by virtue of a certain 'Bull;' and calling on the subjects to rebellion and assassination, even on the bedchamber-woman to do to her 'as Judith did to Holo-

fernes.' She answers by calm contempt. Now and then Burleigh and Walsingham catch some of the rogues, and they meet their deserts; but she for the most part lets them have their way. God is on her side, and she will not fear what man can do to her.

Abroad, the sky is dark and wild, and yet full of fantastic splendour. Spain stands strong and awful, a rising world-tyranny, with its dark-souled Cortezes and Pizarros, Alvas, Don Johns, and Parmas, men whose path is like the lava stream; who go forth slaying and to slay, in the name of their gods, like those old Assyrian conquerors on the walls of Nineveh, with tutelary genii flying above their heads, mingled with the eagles who trail the entrails of the slain. By conquest, intermarriage, or intrigue, she has made all the southern nations her vassals or her tools; close to our own shores, the Netherlands are struggling vainly for their liberties; abroad, the Western Islands, and the whole trade of Africa and India, will in a few years be hers. And already the Pope, whose 'most Catholic' and faithful servant she is, has repaid her services in the cause of darkness by the gift of the whole New World—a gift which she has claimed by cruelties and massacres unexampled since the days of Timour and Zinghis Khan. There she spreads and spreads, as Drake found her picture in the Government House at St. Domingo, the horse leaping through the globe, and underneath, 'Non sufficit orbis.' Who shall withstand her, armed as she is with the three-edged sword of Antichrist—superstition, strength, and gold?

English merchantmen, longing for some share in the riches of the New World, go out to trade in Guinea, in the Azores, in New Spain: and are answered by shot and steel. 'Both policy and religion,' as Fray Simon says, fifty years afterwards, 'forbid Christians to trade with heretics!' 'Lutheran devils, and enemies of God,' are the answer they get in words: in deeds, whenever they have a superior force they may be allowed to land, and to water their ships, even to trade, under exorbitant restrictions: but generally this is merely a trap for them. Forces are hurried up; and the English are attacked treacherously, in spite of solemn compacts; for 'No faith need be kept with heretics.' And woe to them if any be taken prisoners, even wrecked. The galleys, and the rack, and the stake, are their certain doom; for the Inquisition claims the bodies and souls of heretics all over the world, and thinks it sin to lose its own. A few years of such wrong raise questions in the sturdy English heart. What right have these Spaniards to the New World? The Pope's gift? Why, he gave it by the same authority by which he claims the whole world. The formula used when an Indian village is sacked is, that God gave the whole world to St. Peter, and that he has given it to his successors, and they the Indies to the King of Spain. To acknowledge that lie would be to acknowledge the very power by which the Pope claims a right to depose Queen Elizabeth, and give her dominions to whomsoever he will. A fico for bulls!

By possession, then? That may hold for Mexico, Peru, New Grenada, Paraguay, which have been colo-

nized; though they were gained by means which make every one concerned in conquering them worthy of the gallows; and the right is only that of the thief to the purse, whose owner he has murdered. But as for the rest—Why the Spaniard has not colonized, even explored, one-fifth of the New World, not even one-fifth of the coast. Is the existence of a few petty factories, often hundreds of miles apart, at a few river-mouths, to give them a claim to the whole intermediate coast, much less to the vast unknown tracts inside? We will try that. If they appeal to the sword, so be it. The men are treacherous robbers; we will indemnify ourselves for our losses, and God defend the right.

So argued the English; and so sprung up that strange war of reprisals, in which, for eighteen years, it was held that there was no peace between England and Spain beyond the line: *i. e.* beyond the parallel of longitude where the Pope's gift of the western world was said to begin; and, as the quarrel thickened and neared, extended to the Azores, Canaries, and coasts of Africa, where English and Spaniards flew at each other as soon as seen, mutually and by common consent, as natural enemies, each invoking God in the battle with Antichrist.

Into such a world as this goes forth young Raleigh, his heart full of chivalrous worship for England's tutelary genius, his brain aflame with the true miracles of the new-found Hesperides, full of vague hopes, vast imaginations, and consciousness of enormous power. And yet he is no wayward dreamer, unfit for this

work-day world. With a vein of song 'most lofty, insolent and passionate,' indeed unable to see aught without a poetic glow over the whole, he is eminently practical, contented to begin at the beginning, that he may end at the end; one who could 'toil terribly,' 'who always laboured at the matter in hand as if he were born only for that.' Accordingly, he sets to work faithfully and stoutly, to learn his trade of soldiering; and learns it in silence and obscurity. He shares (it seems) in the retreat at Moncontour, and is by at the death of Condé, and toils on for five years, marching and skirmishing, smoking the enemy out of mountain-caves in Languedoc, and all the wild work of war. During the San Bartholomew massacre we hear nothing of him; perhaps he took refuge with Sidney and others in Walsingham's house. No records of these years remain, save a few scattered reminiscences in his works, which mark the shrewd, observant eye of the future statesman.

When he returned we know not. We trace him, in 1576, by some verses prefixed to Gascoigne's satire, The 'Steele Glass,' solid, stately, epigrammatic, 'by Walter Rawley of the Middle Temple.' The style is his; spelling of names matters nought in days in which a man would spell his own name three different ways in one document.

Gascoigne, like Raleigh, knew Lord Grey of Wilton, and most men about town too; and had been a soldier abroad, like Raleigh, probably with him. It seems to have been the fashion for young idlers to lodge among the Templars; indeed, toward the end of the century, they had to be cleared out, as crowding the wigs and

98417

gowns too much; and perhaps proving noisy neighbours, as Raleigh may have done. To this period may be referred, probably, his Justice done on Mr. Charles Chester (Ben Jonson's Carlo Buffone) 'a perpetual talker, and made a noise like a drum in a room; so one time, at a tavern, Raleigh beats him and seals up his mouth, his upper and nether beard, with hard wax.' For there is a great laugh in Raleigh's heart, a genial contempt of asses; and one that will make him enemies hereafter: perhaps shorten his days.

One hears of him next, but only by report, in the Netherlands under Norris, where the nucleus of the English line (especially of its musquetry) was training. For Don John of Austria intends not only to crush the liberties and creeds of the Flemings, but afterwards to marry the Queen of Scots, and conquer England: and Elizabeth, unwillingly and slowly, for she cannot stomach rebels, has sent men and money to The States, to stop Don John in time; which the valiant English and Scotch do on Lammas day, 1578, and that in a fashion till then unseen in war. For coming up late and panting, and 'being more sensible of a little heat of the sun than of any cold fear of death,' they throw off their armour and clothes, and, in their shirts (not over-clean, one fears), give Don John's rashness such a rebuff, that two months more see that wild meteor, with lost hopes and tarnished fame, lie down and vanish below the stormy horizon. In these days, probably, it is that he knew Colonel Bingham, a soldier of fortune, of a 'fancy high and wild, too desultory and over-voluble' who had, among his hundred

and one schemes, one for the plantation of America as poor Sir Thomas Stukely (whom Raleigh must have known well), uncle of the traitor Lewis, had for the peopling of Florida.

Raleigh returns. Ten years has he been learning his soldier's trade in silence. He will take a lesson in seamanship next. The court may come in time: for, by now, the poor squire's younger son must have discovered—perhaps even too fully—that he is not as other men are; that he can speak, and watch, and dare, and endure, as none around him can do. However, there are 'good adventures toward,' as the 'Morte d'Arthur' would say; and he will off with his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert, to carry out his patent for planting Meta Incognita,—'The Unknown Goal,' as Queen Elizabeth has named it,—which will prove to be too truly and fatally unknown. In a latitude south of England, and with an Italian summer, who can guess that the winter will outfreeze Russia itself? The merchant-seaman, like the statesman, had yet many a thing to learn. Instead of smiling at our forefathers' ignorance, let us honour the men who bought knowledge for us their children at the price of lives nobler than our own.

So Raleigh goes on his voyage with Humphrey Gilbert, to carry out the patent for discovering and planting in Meta Incognita: but the voyage prospers not. A 'smart brush with the Spaniards' sends them home again, with the loss of Morgan, their best captain, and 'a tall ship;' and Meta Incognita is forgotten for a while; but not the Spaniards. Who are these who

forbid all English, by virtue of the Pope's bull, to cross the Atlantic? That must be settled hereafter; and Raleigh, ever busy, is off to Ireland, to command a company in that 'common weal, or rather common woe,' as he calls it in a letter to Leicester. Two years and more pass here; and all the records of him which remain are of a man, valiant, daring, and yet prudent beyond his fellows. He hates his work: and is not on too good terms with stern and sour, but brave and faithful Lord Grey: but Lord Grey is Leicester's friend, and Raleigh works patiently under him, like a sensible man, just because he is Leicester's friend. Some modern gentleman of note—I forget who, and do not care to recollect—says, that Raleigh's 'prudence never bore any proportion to his genius.' The next biographer we open accuses him of being too calculating, cunning, time-serving; and so forth. Perhaps both are true. The man's was a character very likely to fall alternately into either sin,—doubtless did so a hundred times. Perhaps both are false. The man's character was, on occasion, certain to rise above both faults. We have evidence that he did so his whole life long.

He is tired of Ireland at last: nothing goes right there:—When has it? Nothing is to be done there. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. He comes to London, and to Court. But how? By spreading his cloak over a muddy place for Queen Elizabeth to step on? It is very likely to be a true story; but biographers have slurred over a few facts in their

hurry to carry out their theory of 'favourites,' and to prove that Elizabeth took up Raleigh on the same grounds that a boarding-school miss might have done. Not that I deny the cloak story, to be a very pretty story; perhaps it justifies, taken alone, Elizabeth's fondness for him. There may have been self-interest in it; we are bound, as 'men of the world,' to impute the dirtiest motive that we can find: but how many self-interested men do we know, who would have had quickness and daring to do such a thing? Men who are thinking about themselves are not generally either so quick-witted, or so inclined to throw away a good cloak, when by much scraping and saving they have got one. I never met a cunning, selfish, ambitious man who would have done such a thing. The reader may: but even if he has, we must ask him, for Queen Elizabeth's sake, to consider that this young Quixote is the close relation of three of the finest public men then living, Champernoun, Gilbert, and Carew. That he is a friend of Sidney; a pet of Leicester; that he has left behind him at Oxford, and brought with him from Ireland, the reputation of being a rara avis, a new star in the firmament; that he had been a soldier in her Majesty's service (and in one in which she has a peculiar private interest) for twelve years; that he has held her commission as one of the triumvirate for governing Munster, and has been the commander of the garrison at Cork; and that it is possible that she may have heard something of him before he threw his cloak under her feet, especially as there has been some controversy (which we have in vain

tried to fathom) between him and Lord Grey about that terrible Smerwick slaughter; of the result of which we know little, but that Raleigh, being called in question about it in London, made such good play with his tongue, that his reputation as an orator and a man of talent was fixed once and for ever.

Within the twelve months he is sent on some secret diplomatic mission about the Anjou marriage; he is in fact now installed in his place as 'a favourite.' And why not? If a man is found to be wise and witty, ready and useful, able to do whatsoever he is put to, why is a sovereign, who has eyes to see the man's worth and courage to use it, to be accused of I know not what, because the said man happens to be good-looking?

Now comes the turning-point of Raleigh's life. What does he intend to be? Soldier, statesman, scholar, or sea-adventurer? He takes the most natural, yet not the wisest course. He will try and be all four at once. He has intellect for it; by worldly wisdom he may have money for it also. Even now he has contrived (no one can tell whence) to build a good bark of two hundred tons, and send her out with Humphrey Gilbert on his second and fatal voyage. Luckily for Raleigh she deserts and comes home, while not yet out of the Channel, or she surely had gone the way of the rest of Gilbert's squadron. Raleigh, of course, loses money by the failure, as well as the hopes which he had grounded on his brother's Transatlantic viceroyalty. And a bitter hang it must have been to him, to find himself bereft of that pure and heroic counsellor, just at his entering into

life. But with the same elasticity which sent him to the grave, he is busy within six months in a fresh expedition. If Meta Incognita be not worth planting, there must be, so Raleigh thinks, a vast extent of coast between it and Florida, which is more genial in climate, perhaps more rich in produce; and he sends Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow to look for the same, and not in vain.

On these Virginian discoveries I shall say but little. Those who wish to enjoy them should read them in all their naive freshness in the originals; and they will subscribe to S. T. Coleridge's dictum, that no one now-a-days can write travels as well as the old worthies who figure in Hakluyt and Purchas.

But to return to the question—What does this man intend to be? A discoverer and colonist; a vindicator of some part at least of America from Spanish claims? Perhaps not altogether: else he would have gone himself to Virginia, at least the second voyage, instead of sending others. But here, it seems, is the fatal, and yet pardonable mistake, which haunts the man throughout. He tries to be too many men at once. Fatal: because, though he leaves his trace on more things than one man is wont to do, he, strictly speaking, conquers nothing, brings nothing to a consummation. Virginia, Guiana, the 'History of the World,' his own career as a statesman—as dictator (for he might have been dictator had he chosen)—all are left unfinished. And yet most pardonable; for if a man feels that he can do many different things, how hard to teach himself that he must

not do them all! How hard to say to himself, 'I must cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye. I must be less than myself, in order really to be anything. I must concentrate my powers on one subject, and that perhaps by no means the most seemingly noble or useful, still less the most pleasant, and forego so many branches of activity in which I might be so distinguished, so useful.' This is a hard lesson. Raleigh took just sixty-six years learning it; and had to carry the result of his experience to the other side of the dark river, for there was no time left to use it on this side. Some readers may have learnt the lesson already. If so, happy and blessed are they. But let them not, therefore, exalt themselves above Walter Raleigh; for that lesson is, of course, soonest learnt by the man who can excel in few things, later by him who can excel in many, and latest of all by him who, like Raleigh, can excel in all.

Few details remain concerning the earlier Court days of Raleigh. He rises rapidly, as we have seen. He has an estate given him in Ireland, near his friend Spenser, where he tries to do well and wisely, colonizing, tilling, and planting it: but like his Virginia expeditions, principally at second hand. For he has swallowed (there is no denying it) the painted bait. He will discover, he will colonize, he will do all manner of beautiful things, at second hand: but he himself will be a courtier. It is very tempting. Who would not, at the age of thirty, have wished to have been one of that chosen band of geniuses and heroes whom

Elizabeth had gathered round her? Who would not, at the age of thirty, have given his pound of flesh to be captain of her guard, and to go with her whithersoever she went? It is not merely the intense gratification to carnal vanity—which if any man denies or scoffs at, always mark him down as especially guilty—which is to be considered; but the real, actual honour, in the mind of one who looked on Elizabeth as the most precious and glorious being which the earth had seen for centuries. To be appreciated by her; to be loved by her; to serve her; to guard her; what could man desire more on earth?

Beside, he becomes a member of Parliament now; Lord Warden of the Stannaries; business which of course keeps him in England, business which he performs, as he does all things, wisely and well. Such a generation as this ought really to respect Raleigh a little more, if it be only for his excellence in their own especial sphere—that of business. Raleigh is a thorough man of business. He can 'toil terribly,' and what is more, toil to the purpose. In all the everyday affairs of life, he remains without a blot; a diligent, methodical, prudent man, who, though he plays for great stakes, ventures and loses his whole fortune again and again, yet never seems to omit the 'doing the duty which lies nearest him;' never gets into mean money scrapes; never neglects tenants or duty; never gives way for one instant to 'the eccentricities of genius.'

If he had done so, be sure that we should have heard of it. For no man can become what he has

become without making many an enemy; and he has his enemies already. On which statement naturally occurs the question—why? An important question too; because several of his later biographers seem to have running in their minds some such train of thought as this—Raleigh must have been a bad fellow, or he would not have had so many enemies; and because he was a bad fellow, there is an *à priori* reason that charges against him are true. Whether this be arguing in a circle or not, it is worth searching out the beginning of this enmity, and the reputed causes of it. In after years it will be, because he is 'damnable proud;' because he hated Essex, and so forth: of which in their places. But what is the earliest count against him? Naunton, who hated Raleigh, and was moreover a rogue, has no reason to give, but that 'the Queen took him for a kind of oracle, which much nettled them all; yea, those he relied on began to take this his sudden favour for an alarm; to be sensible of their own supplantation, and to project his; 'which shortly made him to sing, "Fortune my foe."'

Now, be this true or not, and we do not put much faith in it, it gives no reason for the early dislike of Raleigh, save the somewhat unsatisfactory one which Cain would have given for his dislike of Abel. Moreover, there exists a letter of Essex's, written as thoroughly in the Cain spirit as any we ever read; and we wonder that, after reading that letter, men can find courage to repeat the old sentimentalism about the 'noble and unfortunate' Earl. His hatred of Raleigh—which, as

we shall see hereafter, Raleigh not only bears patiently, but requites with good deeds as long as he can—springs, by his own confession, simply from envy and disappointed vanity. The spoilt boy insults Queen Elizabeth about her liking for the 'knave Raleigh.' She, 'taking hold of one word disdain,' tells Essex that 'there was no such cause why I should thus disdain him.' On which, says Essex, 'as near as I could I did describe unto her what he had been, and what he was; and then I did let her see, whether I had come to disdain his competition of love, or whether I could have comfort to give myself over to the service of a mistress that was in awe of such a man. I spake for grief and choler as much against him as I could: and I think he standing at the door might very well hear the worst that I spoke of him. In the end, I saw she was resolved to defend him, and to cross me.' Whereupon follows a 'scene,' the naughty boy raging and stamping, till he insults the Queen, and calls Raleigh 'a wretch;' whereon poor Elizabeth, who loved the coxcomb for his father's sake, 'turned her away to my Lady Warwick,' and Essex goes grumbling forth.

Raleigh's next few years are brilliant and busy ones; and gladly, did space permit, would I give details of those brilliant adventures which make this part of his life that of a true knight-errant. But they are mere episodes in the history; and we must pass them quickly by, only saying that they corroborate in all things our original notion of the man—just, humane, wise, greatly daring and enduring greatly; and filled

with the one fixed idea, which has grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, the destruction of the Spanish power, and colonization of America by English. His brother Humphrey makes a second attempt to colonize Newfoundland, and perishes as heroically as he had lived. Raleigh, undaunted by his own loss in the adventure and his brother's failure, sends out a fleet of his own to discover to the southward, and finds Virginia. One might spend pages on this beautiful episode; on the simple descriptions of the fair new land which the sea-kings bring home; on the profound (for those times at least) knowledge which prompted Raleigh to make the attempt in that particular direction which had as yet escaped the notice of the Spaniards; on the quiet patience with which, undaunted by the ill-success of the first colonists, he sends out fleet after fleet, to keep the hold which he had once gained; till, unable any longer to support the huge expense, he makes over his patent for discovery to a company of merchants, who fare for many years as ill as Raleigh himself did: but one thing one has a right to say, that to this one man, under the providence of Almighty God, do the whole of the United States of America owe their existence. The work was double. The colony, however small, had to be kept in possession at all hazards; and he did it. But that was not enough. Spain must be prevented from extending her operations northward from Florida; she must be crippled along the whole east coast of America. And Raleigh did that too. We find him for years to

come a part-adventurer in almost every attack on the Spaniards: we find him preaching war against them on these very grounds, and setting others to preach it also. Good old Hariot (Raleigh's mathematical tutor, whom he sent to Virginia) re-echoes his pupil's trumpet-blast. Hooker, in his epistle dedicatory of his Irish History, strikes the same note, and a right noble one it is. 'These Spaniards are trying to build up a world-tyranny by rapine and cruelty. You, sir, call on us to deliver the earth from them, by doing justly and loving mercy; and we will obey you!' is the answer which Raleigh receives, as far as I can find, from every nobler-natured Englishman.

It was an immense conception: a glorious one: it stood out so clear: there was no mistake about its being the absolutely right, wise, patriotic thing; and so feasible, too, if Raleigh could but find 'six cents hommes qui savaient mourir.' But that was just what he could not find. He could draw round him, and did, by the spiritual magnetism of his genius, many a noble soul; but he could not organize them, as he seems to have tried to do, into a coherent body. The English spirit of independent action, never stronger than in that age, and most wisely encouraged, for other reasons, by good Queen Bess, was too strong for him. His pupils will 'fight on their own hook' like so many Yankee rangers: quarrel with each other: grumble at him. For the truth is, he demands of them too high a standard of thought and purpose. He is often a whole heaven above them in the

hugeness of his imagination, the nobleness of his motive; and Don Quixote can often find no better squire than Sancho Panza. Even glorious Sir Richard Grenvile makes a mistake: burns an Indian village because they steal a silver cup: throws back the colonization of Virginia ten years with his over-strict notions of discipline and retributive justice; and Raleigh requites him for his offence by embalming him, his valour and his death, not in immortal verse, but in immortal prose. The 'True Relation of the Fight at the Azores' gives the key-note of Raleigh's heart. If readers will not take that as the text on which his whole life is a commentary, they may know a great deal about him, but him they will never know.

The game becomes fiercer and fiercer. Blow and counterblow between the Spanish king, for the whole West-Indian commerce was a government job, and the merchant nobles of England. At last the Great Armada comes, and the Great Armada goes again. 'Venit, vidit, fugit,' as the medals said of it. And to Walter Raleigh's counsel, by the testimony of all contemporaries, the mighty victory is to be principally attributed. Where all men did heroically, it were invidious to bestow on him alone a crown, 'ob patriam servatam.' But henceforth, Elizabeth knows well that she has not been mistaken in her choice; and Raleigh is better loved than ever, heaped with fresh wealth and honours. And who deserves them better?

The immense value of his services in the defence of England should excuse him from the complaint which

one has been often inclined to bring against him,—Why, instead of sending others Westward Ho, did he not go himself? Surely he could have reconciled the jarring instruments with which he was working. He could have organized such a body of men as perhaps never went out before or since on the same errand. He could have done all that Cortez did, and more; and done it more justly and mercifully.

True. And here seems (as far as little folk dare judge great folk) to have been Raleigh's mistake. He is too wide for real success. He has too many plans; he is fond of too many pursuits. The man who succeeds is generally the narrow man; the man of one idea, who works at nothing but that; sees everything only through the light of that; sacrifices everything to that: the fanatic, in short. By fanatics, whether military, commercial, or religious, and not by 'liberal-minded men' at all, has the world's work been done in all ages. Amid the modern cants, one of the most mistaken is the cant about the 'mission of genius,' the 'mission of the poet.' Poets, we hear in some quarters, are the anointed kings of mankind —at least, so the little poets sing, each to his little fiddle. There is no greater mistake. It is the practical, prosaical fanatic who does the work; and the poet, if he tries to do it, is certain to put down his spade every five minutes, to look at the prospect, and pick flowers, and moralize on dead asses, till he ends a 'Néron malgré lui-même,' fiddling melodiously while Rome is burning. And perhaps this is the secret of Raleigh's failure. He is a fanatic, no doubt, a true knight errant: but he is too

much of a poet withal. The sense of beauty enthrals him at every step. Gloriana's fairy court, with its chivalries and its euphuisms, its masques and its tourneys, and he the most charming personage in it, are too charming for him—as they would have been for us, reader: and he cannot give them up, and go about the one work. He justifies his double-mindedness to himself, no doubt, as he does to the world, by working wisely, indefatigably, and bravely: but still he has put his trust in princes, and in the children of men. His sin, as far as we can see, is not against man, but against God: one which we do not now-a-days call a sin, but a weakness. Be it so. God punished him for it, swiftly and sharply; which I hold to be a sure sign that God also forgave him for it.

So he stays at home, spends, sooner or later, 40,000*l.* on Virginia, writes charming court-poetry with Oxford, Buckhurst, and Paget, brings over Spenser from Ireland and introduces Colin Clout to Gloriana, who loves—as who would not have loved?—that most beautiful of faces and of souls; helps poor puritan Udall out of his scrape as far as he can; begs for Captain Spring, begs for many more, whose names are only known by being connected with some good deed of his. 'When, Sir Walter,' asks Queen Bess, 'will you cease to be a beggar?' 'When your Majesty ceases to be a benefactor.' Perhaps it is in these days that he set up his 'office of address,'—some sort of agency for discovering and relieving the wants of worthy men. So all seems to go well. If he has lost in Virginia, he has gained by Spanish prizes;

his wine-patent is bringing him in a large revenue, and the heavens smile on him. Thou sayest, 'I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art poor and miserable and blind and naked.' Thou shalt learn it, then, and pay dearly for thy lesson.

For, in the meanwhile, Raleigh falls into a very great sin, for which, as usual with his elect, God inflicts swift and instant punishment; on which, as usual, biographers talk much unwisdom. He seduces Miss Throgmorton, one of the maids of honour. Elizabeth is very wroth; and had she not good reason to be wroth? Is it either fair or reasonable to talk of her 'demanding a monopoly of love,' and 'being incensed at the temerity of her favourite, in presuming to fall in love and marry without her consent?' Away with such cant. The plain facts are: that a man nearly forty years old abuses his wonderful gifts of body and mind, to ruin a girl nearly twenty years younger than himself. What wonder if a virtuous woman—and Queen Elizabeth was virtuous—thought it a base deed, and punished it accordingly? There is no more to be discovered in the matter, save by the vulturine nose which smells carrion in every rose-bed. Raleigh has a great attempt on the Plate-fleets in hand; he hurries off from Chatham, and writes to young Cecil, on the 10th of March, 'I mean not to come away, as some say I will, for fear of a marriage, and I know not what. . . . For I protest before God, there is none on the face of the earth that I would be fastened unto.'

This famous passage is one of those over which the

virtuosity of modern times, rejoicing in evil, has hung so fondly, as giving melancholy proof of the 'duplicity of Raleigh's character;' as if a man who once in his life had told an untruth was proved by that fact to be a rogue from birth to death: while others have kindly given him the benefit of a doubt whether the letter were not written after a private marriage, and therefore Raleigh, being 'joined unto' some one already, had a right to say, that he did not wish to be joined to any one. But I do not concur in this doubt. Four months after, Sir Edward Stafford writes to Anthony Bacon, 'If you have anything to do with Sir W. R., or any love to make to Mistress Throgmorton, at the Tower to-morrow you may speak with them.' This implies that no marriage had yet taken place. And surely, if there had been a private marriage, two people who were about to be sent to the Tower for their folly would have made the marriage public at once, as the only possible self-justification. But it is a pity, in my opinion, that biographers, before pronouncing upon that supposed lie of Raleigh's, had not taken the trouble to find out what the words mean. In their virtuous haste to prove him a liar, they have overlooked the fact that the words, as they stand, are unintelligible, and the argument self-contradictory. He wants to prove, we suppose, that he does not go to sea for fear of being forced to marry Miss Throgmorton. It is, at least, an unexpected method of so doing in a shrewd man like Raleigh, to say that he wishes to marry no one at all. 'Don't think that I run away for fear of a marriage, for I do not wish to marry

any one on the face of the earth,' is a speech which may prove Raleigh to have been a fool, but we must understand it before we can say that it proves him a rogue. If we had received such a letter from a friend, we should have said at once, 'Why the man, in his hurry and confusion, has omitted *the* word; he must have meant to write, not 'There is none on the face of the earth that I would be fastened to,' but 'There is none on the face of the earth that I would *rather* be fastened to,' which would at once make sense, and suit fact. For Raleigh not only married Miss Throgmorton forthwith, but made her the best of husbands. My conjectural emendation may go for what it is worth: but that the passage, as it stands in Murdin's State Papers (the MSS. I have not seen) is either misquoted, or miswritten by Raleigh himself, I cannot doubt. He was not one to think nonsense, even if he scribbled it.

The Spanish raid turns out well. Raleigh overlooks Elizabeth's letters of recall till he finds out that the King of Spain has stopped the Plate-fleet for fear of his coming; and then returns, sending on Sir John Burrough to the Azores, where he takes the 'Great Carack,' the largest prize (1,600 tons) which had ever been brought into England. The details of that gallant fight stand in the pages of Hakluyt. It raised Raleigh once more to wealth, though not to favour. Shortly after he returns from the sea, he finds himself, where he deserves to be, in the Tower, where he does more than one thing which brought him no credit. How far we are justified in calling his quarrel with Sir George

Carew, his keeper, for not letting him 'disguise himself, and get into a pair of oars to ease his mind but with a sight of the queen, or his heart would break,' hypocrisy, is a very different matter. Honest Arthur Gorges, a stanch friend of Raleigh's, tells the story laughingly and lovingly, as if he thought Raleigh sincere, but somewhat mad: and yet honest Gorges has a good right to say a bitter thing; for after having been 'ready to break with laughing at seeing them two brawl and scramble like madmen, and Sir George's new periwig torn off his crown,' he sees 'the iron walking' and daggers out, and playing the part of him who taketh a dog by the ears, 'purchased such a rap on the knuckles, that I wished both their pates broken, and so with much ado they staid their brawl to see my bloody fingers,' and then set to work to abuse the hapless peacemaker. After which things Raleigh writes a letter to Cecil, which is still more offensive in the eyes of virtuous biographers,—how 'his heart was never broken till this day, when he hears the Queen goes so far off, whom he followed with love and desire on so many journeys, and am now left behind in a dark prison all alone.' . . . 'I that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks,' and so forth, in a style in which the vulturine nose must needs scent carrion, just because the roses are more fragrant than they should be in a world where all ought to be either vultures, or carrion for their dinners. As for his despair, had he not good reason to be in despair? By his own sin, he

has hurled himself down the hill which he has so painfully climbed. He is in the Tower—surely no pleasant or hopeful place for any man. Elizabeth is exceedingly wroth with him; and what is worse, he deserves what he has got. His whole fortune is ventured in an expedition over which he has no control, which has been unsuccessful in its first object, and which may be altogether unsuccessful in that which it has undertaken as a pis-aller, and so leave him penniless. There want not, too, those who will trample on the fallen. The deputy has been cruelly distraining on his Irish tenants for a 'supposed debt of his to the Queen of 400*l.* for rent,' which was indeed but fifty marks, and which was paid, and has carried off 500 milch kine from the poor settlers whom he has planted there, and forcibly thrust him out of possession of a castle. Moreover, the whole Irish estates are 'likely to come to ruin; for nothing prevails but rascality among the English soldiers, impotence among the governors, and rebellion among the natives. Three thousand Burkes are up in arms; his 'prophecy of this rebellion' ten days ago was laughed at, and now has come true; and altogether, Walter Raleigh and all belonging to him is in as evil case as he ever was on earth. No wonder, poor fellow, if he behowls himself lustily, and not always wisely, to Cecil, and every one else who will listen to him.

As for his fine speeches about Elizabeth, why forget the standing-point from which such speeches were made? Over and above his present ruin, it was (and ought to have been) an utterly horrible and unbearable

thing to Raleigh, or any man, to have fallen into disgrace with Elizabeth by his own fault. He feels (and perhaps rightly) that he is as it were excommunicate from England, and the mission and the glory of England. Instead of being, as he was till now, one of a body of brave men working together in one great common cause, he has cut himself off from the congregation by his own selfish lust, and there he is left alone with his shame. We must try to realize to ourselves the way in which such men as Raleigh looked not only at Elizabeth, but at all the world. There was, in plain palpable fact, something about the Queen, her history, her policy, the times, the glorious part which England, and she as the incarnation of the then English spirit, were playing upon earth, which raised imaginative and heroical souls into a permanent exaltation—a 'fairyland,' as they called it themselves, which seems to us fantastic, and would be fantastic in us, because we are not at their work, or in their days. There can be no doubt that a number of as noble men as ever stood together on the earth did worship that woman, fight for her, toil for her, risk all for her, with a pure chivalrous affection which has furnished one of the most beautiful pages in all the book of history. Blots there must needs have been, and inconsistencies, selfishnesses, follies; for they too were men of like passions with ourselves, but let us look at the fair vision as a whole, and thank God that such a thing has for once existed even imperfectly on this sinful earth: instead of playing

the part of Ham, and 'falling under his curse; the penalty of slavishness, cowardice, loss of noble daring, which surely falls on any generation which is 'banausos,' to use Aristotle's word; which rejoices in its forefathers' shame; and, unable to believe in the nobleness of others, is unable to become noble itself.

As for the 'Alexander and Diana' affectations, they were the language of the time: and certainly this generation has no reason to find fault with them, or with a good deal more of the 'affectations' and 'flattery' of Elizabethan times, while it listens complacently night after night 'to honourable members' complimenting not Queen Elizabeth, but Sir Jabesh Windbag, Fiddle, Faddle, Red-tape, and party, with protestations of deepest respect and fullest confidence in the very speeches in which they bring accusations of every offence short of high-treason—to be understood, of course, in a 'parliamentary sense,' as Mr. Pickwick's were in a 'Pickwickian' one. If a generation of Knoxes and Mortons, Burleighs and Raleighs, shall ever arise again, one wonders by what name they will call the parliamentary morality and parliamentary courtesy of a generation which has meted out such measure to their ancestors' failings?

'But Queen Elizabeth was an old woman then.' I thank the objector even for that 'then;' for it is much now-a-days to find any one who believes that Queen Elizabeth was ever young, or who does not talk of her as if she was born about seventy years of age covered with rouge and wrinkles. I will undertake to say, that as to the beauty of this woman

there is a greater mass of testimony, and from the very best judges too, than there is of the beauty of any personage in history; and yet it has become the fashion now to deny even that. The plain facts seem, that she was very graceful, active, accomplished in all outward manners, of a perfect figure, and of that style of intellectual beauty, depending on expression, which attracted (and we trust always will attract) Britons, far more than that merely sensuous loveliness in which no doubt Mary Stuart far surpassed her. And there seems little doubt, that like many Englishwomen, she retained her beauty to a very late period in life, not to mention that she was, in 1592, just at that age of rejuvenescence which makes many a woman more lovely at sixty than she has been since she was thirty-five. No doubt, too, she used every artificial means to preserve her famous complexion; and quite right she was. This beauty of hers had been a talent, as all beauty is, committed to her by God; it had been an important element in her great success; men had accepted it as what beauty of form and expression generally is, an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace; and while the inward was unchanged, what wonder if she tried to preserve the outward? If she was the same, why should she not try to look the same? And what blame to those who worshipped her, if, knowing that she was the same, they too should fancy that she looked the same, the Elizabeth of their youth, and should talk as if the fair flesh, as well as the fair

spirit, was immortal? Does not every loving husband do so, when he forgets the grey hair and the sunken cheek, and all the wastes of time; and sees the partner of many joys and sorrows not as she has become, but as she was, ay, and is to him, and will be to him, he trusts, through all eternity? There is no feeling in these Elizabethan worshippers which we have not seen, potential and crude, again and again in the best and noblest of young men whom we have met, till it was crushed in them by the luxury, effeminacy, and unbelief in chivalry, which are the sure accompaniment of a long peace; which war may burn up with beneficent fire.

But we must hasten on now; for Raleigh is out of prison in September; and by the next spring in parliament, speaking wisely and well, especially on his fixed idea, war with Spain, which he is rewarded for forthwith in Father Parson's 'Andreæ Philopatris Responsio,' by a charge of founding a school of Atheism for the corruption of young gentlemen; a charge which Lord Chief-Justice Popham, Protestant as he is, will find it useful one day to recollect.

Elizabeth, however, now that Raleigh has married the fair Throgmorton, and done wisely in other matters, restores him to favour. If he has sinned, he has suffered: but he is as useful as ever, now that his senses have returned to him; and he is making good speeches in parliament, instead of bad ones to weak maidens; so we find him once more in favour, and possessor of Sherborne Manor, where he builds and beautifies, with 'groves and gardens of much variety

and great delight.' And God, too, seems to have forgiven him; perhaps has forgiven; for there the fair Throgmorton brings him a noble boy. Ut sis vitalis metuo puer!

Raleigh will quote David's example one day, not wisely or well. Does David's example ever cross him now, and those sad words,—'The Lord hath put away thy sin, . . . nevertheless the child that is born unto thee shall die?'

Let that be as it may, all is sunshine once more. Sherborne Manor, a rich share in the great carack, a beautiful wife, a child; what more does this man want to make him happy? Why should he not settle down upon his lees, like ninety-nine out of the hundred, or at least try a peaceful and easy path toward more 'praise and pudding?' The world answers, or his biographers answer for him, that he needs to reinstate himself in his mistress's affection; which is true or not, according as we take it. If they mean thereby, as most seem to mean, that it was a mere selfish and ambitious scheme by which to wriggle into court favour once more—why, let them mean it: I shall only observe, that the method which Raleigh took was a rather more dangerous and self-sacrificing one than courtiers are wont to take. But if it be meant that Walter Raleigh spoke somewhat thus with himself, —'I have done a base and dirty deed, and have been punished for it. I have hurt the good name of a sweet woman who loves me, and whom I find to be a treasure; and God, instead of punishing me by taking

her from me, has rendered me good for evil by giv
her to me. I have justly offended a mistress wh
I worship, and who, after having shown her j
indignation, has returned me good for evil by giv
me these fair lands of Sherborne, and only forbid
her presence till the scandal has passed away. She
sees, and rewards my good in spite of my evil; and
I, too, know that I am better than I have seemed;
that I am fit for nobler deeds than seducing maids of
honour. How can I prove that? How can I redeem
my lost name for patriotism and public daring? How
can I win glory for my wife, seek that men shall
forget her past shame in the thought, 'She is Walter
Raleigh's wife?' How can I show my mistress that
I loved her all along, that I acknowledge her bounty,
her mingled justice and mercy? How can I render to
God for all the benefits which He has done unto me?
How can I do a deed the like of which was never
done in England?'

If all this had passed through Walter Raleigh's mind, what could we say of it, but that it was the natural and rational feeling of an honourable and right-hearted man, burning to rise to the level which he knew ought to be his, because he knew that he had fallen below it? And what right better way of testifying these feelings than to do what, as we shall see, Raleigh did? What right have we to impute to him lower motives than these, while we confess that these righteous and noble motives would have been natural and rational;—indeed, just what we flatter

selves that we should have felt in his place? Of rse, in his grand scheme, the thought came in id I shall win to myself honour, and glory, and lth,'—of course. And pray, sir, does it not come in your grand schemes; and yours; and yours? If you made a fortune to-morrow by some wisely and benevolently managed factory, would you forbid all speech of the said wisdom and benevolence, because you had intended that wisdom and benevolence should pay you a good percentage? Away with cant, and let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.

So Raleigh hits upon a noble project; a desperate one, true: but he will do it or die. He will leave pleasant Sherborne, and the bosom of the beautiful bride, and the first-born son, and all which to most makes life worth having, and which Raleigh enjoys more intensely than most men; for he is a poet, and a man of strong nervous passions withal. But,—

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.

And he will go forth to endure heat, hunger, fever, danger of death in battle, danger of the Inquisition, rack, and stake, in search of El Dorado. What so strange in that? I have known half-a-dozen men who, in his case, and conscious of his powers, would have done the same from the same noble motive.

He begins prudently; and sends a Devonshire man, Captain Whiddon—probably one of the Whiddons of beautiful Chagford—to spy out the Orinoco. He finds

that the Spaniards are there already; that Berreo, who has attempted El Dorado from the westward, starting from New Granada and going down the rivers, is trying to settle on the Orinoco mouth; that he is hanging the poor natives, encouraging the Caribs to hunt them and sell them for slaves, imprisoning the caciques to extort their gold, torturing, ravishing, kidnapping, and conducting himself as was usual among Spaniards of those days.

Raleigh's spirit is stirred within him. If 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' fiction as it is, once excited us, how must a far worse reality have excited Raleigh, as he remembered that these Spaniards are as yet triumphant in iniquity, and as he remembered, too, that these same men are the sworn foes of England, her liberty, her Bible, and her queen? What a deed, to be beforehand with them for once! To dispossess them of one corner of that western world, where they have left no trace but blood and flame! He will go himself: he will find El Dorado and its golden Emperor; and instead of conquering, plundering, and murdering him, as Cortez did Montezuma, and Pizarro Atahuallpa, he will show him English strength; espouse his quarrel against the Spaniards; make him glad to become Queen Elizabeth's vassal tributary, perhaps leave him a body-guard of English veterans, perhaps colonize his country, and so at once avenge and protect the oppressed Indians, and fill the Queen's treasury with the riches of a land equal, if not superior, to Peru and Mexico.

Such is his dream; vague perhaps: but far less vague

than those with which Cortez and Pizarro started, and succeeded. After a careful survey of the whole matter, I must give it as my deliberate opinion, that Raleigh was more reasonable in his attempt, and had more fair evidence of its feasibility, than either Cortez or Pizarro had for theirs. It is a bold assertion. If any reader doubts its truth, he cannot do better than to read the whole of the documents connected with the two successful, and the one unsuccessful, attempts at finding a golden kingdom. Let them read first Prescott's 'Conquests of Mexico and Peru,' and then Schomburgk's edition of Raleigh's 'Guiana.' They will at least confess, when they have finished, that truth is stranger than fiction.

Of Raleigh's credulity in believing in El Dorado, much has been said. I am sorry to find even so wise a man as Sir Robert Schomburgk, after bearing good testimony to Raleigh's wonderful accuracy about all matters which he had an opportunity of observing, using this term of credulity. I must dare to differ on that point even with Sir Robert, and ask by what right the word is used? First, Raleigh says nothing about El Dorado (as every one is forced to confess) but what Spaniard on Spaniard had been saying for fifty years. Therefore the blame of credulity ought to rest with the Spaniards, from Philip von Huten, Orellana, and George of Spires, upward to Berreo. But it rests really with no one. For nothing, if we will examine the documents, is told of the riches of El Dorado which had not been found to be true, and seen by the eyes of men still living, in Peru and Mexico.

Not one-fifth of America had been explored, and already two El Dorados had been found and conquered. What more rational than to suppose that there was a third, a fourth, a fifth, in the remaining four-fifths? The reports of El Dorado among the savages were just of the same kind as those by which Cortez and Pizarro hunted out Mexico and Peru, saving that they were far more widely spread, and confirmed by a succession of adventurers. I entreat readers to examine this matter, in Raleigh, Schomburgk, Humboldt, and Condamine, and judge for themselves. As for Hume's accusations, I pass them by as equally silly and shameless, only saying, for the benefit of readers, that they have been refuted completely by every one who has written since Hume's days; and to those who are inclined to laugh at Raleigh for believing in Amazons and 'men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders,' I can only answer thus——

About the Amazons, Raleigh told what he was told; what the Spaniards who went before him, and Condamine who came after him, were told. Humboldt thinks the story possibly founded on fact; and I must say, that after reviewing all that has been said thereon, it does seem to me the simplest solution of the matter just to believe it true; to believe that there was, about his time, or a little before, somewhere about the Upper Orinoco, a warlike community of women. Humboldt shows how likely such would be to spring up where women flee from their male tyrants into the forests. As for the fable which connected them with the lake Manoa, and the city of El Dorado, we can only

answer, 'If not true there and then, it is true elsewhere now;' for the Amazonian guards of the king of Dahomey at this moment, as all know, surpass in strangeness and in ferocity all that has been reported of the Orinocquan viragos, and thus prove once more, that truth is stranger than fiction.*

Beside; and here I stand stubborn, regardless of gibes and sneers; it is not yet proven that there was not, in the sixteenth century, some rich and civilized kingdom like Peru or Mexico, in the interior of South America. Sir Robert Schomburgk has disproved the existence of Lake Parima; but it will take a long time, and more explorers than one, to prove that there are no ruins of ancient cities, such as Stephens stumbled on in Yucatan still buried in the depths of the forest. Fifty years of ruin would suffice to wrap them in a leafy veil which would hide them from every one who did not literally run against them. Tribes would die out, or change place, as the Atures, and other great nations have done in those parts, and every traditional record of them perish gradually; for it is only gradually and lately that it has perished: while if it be asked, What has become of the people themselves? the answer is, that when any race (like most of the American races in the sixteenth century) is in a dying state, it hardly needs war to thin it down, and reduce the remnant to savagery. Greater nations than El Dorado was even supposed to be have vanished ere now, and left not a trace behind: and so

* Since this was written, a similar Amazonian body-guard has been discovered, I hear, in Pegu.

may they. But enough of this. I leave the quarrel to that honest and patient warder of tourneys, Old Time, who will surely do right at last, and go on to the dog-headed worthies, without necks, and long hair hanging down behind, who, as a cacique told Raleigh, that 'they had of late years slain many hundreds of his father's people,' and in whom even Humboldt was not always allowed, he says, to disbelieve, (so much for Hume's scoff at Raleigh as a liar,) one old cacique boasting to him that he had seen them with his own eyes. Humboldt's explanation is, that the Caribs, being the cleverest and strongest Indians, are also the most imaginative; and therefore, being fallen children of Adam, the greatest liars; and that they invented both El Dorado and the dog-heads out of pure wickedness. Be it so. But all lies crystallize round some nucleus of truth; and it really seems to me nothing very wonderful, if the story should be on the whole true, and these worthies were in the habit of dressing themselves up, like foolish savages as they were, in the skins of the Aguara dog, with what not of stuffing, and tails, and so forth, in order to astonish the weak minds of the Caribs, just as the Red Indians dress up in their feasts as bears, wolves, and deer, with fox-tails, false bustles of bison skin, and so forth. There are plenty of traces of such foolish attempts at playing 'bogy' in the history of savages, even of our own Teutonic forefathers; and this I suspect to be the simple explanation of the whole mare's nest. As for Raleigh being a fool for believing it; the reasons he gives for believing it are very rational; the reasons Hume

gives for calling him a fool rest merely on the story's being strange: on which grounds one might disbelieve most matters in heaven and earth, from one's own existence to what one sees in every drop of water under the microscope, yea, to the growth of every seed. The only sound proof that dog-headed men are impossible is to be found in comparative anatomy, a science of which Hume knew no more than Raleigh, and which for one marvel it has destroyed has revealed a hundred. I do not doubt, that if Raleigh had seen and described a kangaroo, especially its all but miraculous process of gestation, Hume would have called that a lie also; but I will waste no more time in proving that no man is so credulous as the unbeliever—the man who has such mighty and world-embracing faith in himself, that he makes his own little brain the measure of the universe. Let the dead bury their dead.

Raleigh sails for Guiana. The details of his voyage should be read at length. Everywhere they show the eye of a poet as well as of a man of science. He sees enough to excite his hopes more wildly than ever; he goes hundreds of miles up the Orinoco in an open boat, suffering every misery; but keeping up the hearts of his men, who cry out, 'Let us go on, we care not how far.' He makes friendship with the caciques, and enters into alliance with them on behalf of Queen Elizabeth against the Spaniards. Unable to pass the falls of the Caroli, and the rainy season drawing on, he returns, beloved and honoured by all the Indians, boasting that, during the whole time he was there, no woman was the worse for

any man of his crew. Altogether, we know few episodes of history so noble, righteous, and merciful, as this Guiana voyage. But he has not forgotten the Spaniards. At Trinidad he payed his ships with the asphalt of the famous Pitch-lake; and stood—and with what awe such a man must have stood—beneath the noble forest of Moriche fan-palms on its brink. He then attacked, not, by his own confession, without something too like treachery, the new town of San José, takes Berreo prisoner, and delivers from captivity five caciques, whom Berreo kept bound in one chain, 'basting their bodies with burning bacon'—an old trick of the Conquistadores—to make them discover their gold. He tells them that he was 'the servant of a queen who was the greatest cacique of the north, and a virgin; who had more caciqui under her than there were trees on that island; that she was an enemy of the Castellani (Spaniards) in behalf of their tyranny and oppression, and that she delivered all such nations about her as were by them oppressed, and having freed all the coast of the northern world from their servitude, had sent me to free them also, and withal to defend the country of Guiana from their invasion and conquest.' After which perfectly true and rational speech, he subjoins (as we think equally honestly and rationally,) 'I showed them her Majesty's picture, which they so admired and honoured, as it had been easy to have brought them idolaters thereof.'

This is one of the stock charges against Raleigh, at which all biographers (except quiet, sensible Oldys,

who, dull as he is, is far more fair and rational than most of his successors) break into virtuous shrieks of 'flattery,' 'meanness,' 'adulation,' 'courtiership,' and so forth. One biographer is of opinion that the Indians would have admired far more the picture of a 'red monkey.' Sir Robert Schomburgk, unfortunately for the red monkey theory, though he quite agrees that Raleigh's flattery was very shocking, says, that from what he knows—and no man knows more—of Indian taste, they would have far preferred to the portrait which Raleigh showed them—not a red monkey, but —such a picture as that at Hampton Court, in which Elizabeth is represented in a fantastic court dress· Raleigh, it seems, must be made out a rogue at all risks, though by the most opposite charges. The monkey theory is answered, however, by Sir Robert; and Sir Robert is answered, I think, by the plain fact, that, of course, Raleigh's portrait was exactly such a one as Sir Robert says they would have admired; a picture probably in a tawdry frame, representing Queen Bess, just as queens were always painted then, bedizened with 'browches, pearls, and owches,' satin and ruff, and probably with crown on head and sceptre in hand, made up, as likely as not, expressly for the purpose for which it was used. In the name of all simplicity and honesty, I ask, why is Raleigh to be accused of saying that the Indians admired Queen Elizabeth's beauty, when he never even hints at it? And why do all commentators deliberately forget the preceding paragraph—Raleigh's

proclamation to the Indians, and the circumstances under which it was spoken? The Indians are being murdered, ravished, sold for slaves, basted with burning fat; and grand white men come like avenging angels, and in one day sweep their tyrants out of the land, restore them to liberty and life, and say to them, 'A great Queen far across the seas has sent us to do this. Thousands of miles away she has heard of your misery, and taken pity on you; and if you will be faithful to her she will love you, and deal justly with you, and protect you against these Spaniards who are devouring you as they have devoured all the Indians round you; and for a token of it—a sign that we tell you truth, and that there is really such a great Queen, who is the Indian's friend—here is the picture of her.' What wonder if the poor idolatrous creatures had fallen down and worshipped the picture—just as millions do that of the Virgin Mary, without a thousandth part as sound and practical reason—as that of a divine, all-knowing, all-merciful deliverer? As for its being the picture of a beautiful woman or not, they would never think of that. The fair complexion and golden hair would be a sign to them that she belonged to the mighty white people, even if there were no bedizenment of jewels and crowns over and above; and that would be enough for them. When will biographers learn to do common justice to their fellow-men, by exerting now and then some small amount of dramatic imagination, just sufficient to put themselves for a moment in the place of those of whom they write?

So ends his voyage: in which, he says, 'from myself I have deserved no thanks, for I am returned a beggar and withered.' The only thing which, as far as I can find, he brought home was some of the delicious scaly peaches of the Moriche palm—the 'Arbol de Vida,' or tree of life, which gives sustenance and all else needful to whole tribes of Indians. 'But I might have bettered my poor estate if I had not only respected her Majesty's future honour and riches. It became not the former fortune in which I once lived to go journeys of piccory' (pillage); 'and it had sorted ill with the offices of honour which, by her Majesty's grace, I hold this day in England, to run from cape to cape, and place to place, for the pillage of ordinary prizes.'

So speaks one whom it has been the fashion to consider as little better than a pirate, and that, too, in days when the noblest blood in England thought no shame (as indeed it was no shame) to enrich themselves with Spanish gold. But so it is throughout this man's life. If there be a nobler word than usual to be spoken, or a more wise word either, if there be a more chivalous deed to be done, or a more prudent deed either, that word and that deed are pretty sure to be Walter Raleigh's.

But the blatant beast has been busy at home; and, in spite of Chapman's heroical verses, he meets with little but cold looks. Never mind. If the world will not help to do the deed, he will do it by himself; and no time must be lost, for the Spaniards on their

part will lose none. So, after six months, the faithful Keymis sails again, again helped by the Lord High Admiral and Sir Robert Cecil. It is a hard race for one private man against the whole power and wealth of Spain; and the Spaniard has been beforehand with them, and re-occupied the country. They have fortified themselves at the mouth of the Caroli, so it is impossible to get to the gold mines; they are enslaving the wretched Indians, carrying off their women, intending to transplant some tribes and to expel others, and arming cannibal tribes against the inhabitants. All is misery and rapine; the scattered remnant comes asking piteously, why Raleigh does not come over to deliver them? Have the Spaniards slain him, too? Keymis comforts them as he best can; hears of more gold mines; and gets back safe, a little to his own astonishment; for eight-and-twenty ships of war have been sent to Trinidad, to guard the entrance to El Dorado, not surely, as Keymis well says, 'to keep us only from tobacco.' A colony of 500 persons is expected from Spain. The Spaniard is well aware of the richness of the prize, says Keymis, who all through shows himself a worthy pupil of his master. A careful, observant man he seems to have been, trained by that great example to overlook no fact, even the smallest. He brings home lists of rivers, towns, caciques, poison-herbs, words, what not; he has fresh news of gold, spleen-stones, kidney-stones, and some fresh specimens: but be that as it may, he, 'without going as far as his eyes can warrant, can promise Brazil-wood, honey,

cotton, balsamum, and drugs, to defray charges.' He would fain copy Raleigh's style, too, and 'whence his lamp had oil, borrow light also,' 'seasoning his unsavoury speech' with some of the 'leaven of Raleigh's discourse.' Which, indeed, he does even to little pedantries and attempts at classicality; and after professing that 'himself and the remnant of his few years he hath bequeathed wholly to Raleana, and his thoughts live only in that action, he rises into something like grandeur when he begins to speak of that ever-fertile subject, the Spanish cruelties to the Indians; 'Doth not the cry of the poor succourless ascend unto the heavens? Hath God forgotten to be gracious to the work of his own hands. Or, shall not his judgments in a day of visitation by the ministry of his chosen servant come upon these bloodthirsty butchers, like rain into a fleece of wool?' Poor Keymis! To us he is by no means the least beautiful figure in this romance; a faithful, diligent, loving man, unable, as the event proved, to do great deeds by himself, but inspired with a great idea by contact with a mightier spirit, to whom he clings through evil report, and poverty, and prison, careless of self to the last, and ends tragically, 'faithful unto death' in the most awful sense.

But here remark two things: first, that Cecil believes in Raleigh's Guiana scheme; next, that the occupation of Orinoco by the Spaniards, which Raleigh is accused of having concealed from James in 1617, has been, ever since 1595, matter of the most public notorietv.

Raleigh has not been idle in the meanwhile. It has been found necessary after all to take the counsel which he gave in vain in 1588, to burn the Spanish fleet in harbour; and the heroes are gone down to Cadiz fight, and in one day of thunder storm the Sevastopol of Spain. Here, as usual, we find Raleigh, though in an inferior command, leading the whole by virtue of superior wisdom. When the good Lord Admiral will needs be cautious, and land the soldiers first, it is Raleigh who persuades him to force his way into the harbour, to the joy of all captains. When hot-headed Essex, casting his hat into the sea for joy, shouts 'Intramos,' and will in at once, Raleigh's time for caution comes, and he persuades them to wait till the next morning, and arrange the order of attack. That, too, Raleigh has to do, and moreover to lead it; and lead it he does. Under the forts are seventeen galleys; the channel is 'scoured' with cannon: but on holds Raleigh's 'Warspite,' far ahead of the rest, through the thickest of the fire, answering forts and galleys 'with a blur of the trumpet to each piece, disdaining to shoot at those esteemed dreadful monsters.' For there is a nobler enemy ahead. Right in front lie the galleons; and among them the 'Philip' and the 'Andrew', two of those who boarded the Revenge.' This day there shall be a reckoning for the blood of his old friend; he is 'resolved to be revenged for the 'Revenge,' Sir Richard Grenvile's fatal ship, 'or second her with his own life;' and well he keeps his vow. Three hours pass of desperate valour, during which, so narrow is the passage,

only seven English ships, thrusting past each other, all but quarrelling in their noble rivalry, engage the whole Spanish fleet of fifty-seven sail, and destroy it utterly. The 'Philip' and 'Thomas,' burn themselves despairing. The English boats save the 'Andrew' and 'Matthew.' One passes over the hideous record. 'If any man,' says Raleigh, 'had a desire to see hell itself, it was there most lively figured.' Keymis's prayer is answered in part, even while he writes it; and the cry of the Indians has not ascended in vain before the throne of God!

The soldiers are landed; the city stormed and sacked, not without mercies and courtesies, though, to women and unarmed folk, which win the hearts of the vanquished, and live till this day in well-known ballads. The Flemings begin a 'merciless slaughter.' Raleigh and the Lord Admiral beat them off. Raleigh is carried on shore with a splinter wound in the leg, which lames him for life: but returns on board in an hour in agony; for there is no admiral left to order the fleet, and all are run headlong to the sack. In vain he attempts to get together sailors the following morning, and attack the Indian fleet in Porto Real Roads; within twenty-four hours it is burnt by the Spaniards themselves; and all Raleigh wins is no booty, a lame leg, and the honour of having been the real author of a victory even more glorious than that of 1588.

So he returns; having written to Cecil the highest praises of Essex, whom he treats with all courtesy and

fairness; which those who will may call cunning: we have as good a right to say that he was returning good for evil. There were noble qualities in Essex. All the world gave him credit for them, and far more than he deserved; why should not Raleigh have been just to him; even have conceived, like the rest of the world, high hopes of him, till he himself destroyed these hopes? For now storms are rising fast. On their return Cecil is in power. He has been made Secretary of State instead of Bodley, Essex's pet, and the spoilt child begins to sulk. On which matter, I am sorry to say, historians talk much unwisdom, about Essex's being too 'open and generous, &c., for a courtier,' and 'presuming on his mistress's passion for him;' and representing Elizabeth as desiring to be thought beautiful, and 'affecting at sixty the sighs, loves, tears, and tastes of a girl of sixteen,' and so forth. It is really time to get rid of some of this fulsome talk, culled from such triflers as Osborne, if not from the darker and fouler sources of Parsons and the Jesuit slanderers, which I meet with a flat denial. There is simply no proof. She in love with Essex or Cecil? Yes, as a mother with a son. Were they not the children of her dearest and most faithful servants, men who had lived heroic lives for her sake? What wonder if she fancied that she saw the fathers in the sons? They had been trained under her eye. What wonder if she fancied that they could work as their fathers worked before them? And what shame if her childless heart yearned over them with unspeakable affection, and longed in her old age to lay her hands upon the shoulders of those two

young men, and say to England, 'Behold the children which God, and not the flesh, has given me? Most strange it is, too, that women, who ought at least to know a woman's heart, have been especially forward in publishing these scandals, and sullying their pages by retailing pruriencies against such a one as Queen Elizabeth.

But to return. Raleigh attaches himself to Cecil; and he has good reason. Cecil is the cleverest man in England, saving himself. He has trusted and helped him, too, in two Guiana voyages; so the connexion is one of gratitude as well as prudence. We know not whether he helped him in the third Guiana voyage in the same year, under Captain Berry, a north Devon man, from Grenvile's country; who found a 'mighty folk,' who were 'something pleasant, having drunk much that day,' and carried bows with golden handles: but failed in finding the Lake Parima, and so came home.

Raleigh's first use of his friendship with Cecil is to reconcile him, to the astonishment of the world, with Essex, alleging how much good may grow by it; for now 'the Queen's continual unquietness will grow to contentment.' That, too, those who will may call policy. We have as good a right to call it the act of a wise and faithful subject, and to say, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' He has his reward for it, in full restoration to the Queen's favour; he deserves it. He proves himself once more worthy of power, and it is given to him. Then there is to be a second great expedition: but this time its aim is the

Azores. Philip, only maddened by the loss at Cadiz, is preparing a third armament for the invasion of England and Ireland, and it is said to lie at the islands to protect the Indian fleet. Raleigh has the victualling of the land-forces, and, like everything else he takes in hand, 'it is very well done.' Lord Howard declines the chief command, and it is given to Essex. Raleigh is to be rear-admiral.

By the time they reach the Azores, Essex has got up a foolish quarrel against Raleigh for disrespect in having stayed behind to bring up some stragglers. But when no Armada is to be found at the Azores, Essex has after all to ask Raleigh what he shall do next. Conquer the Azores, says Raleigh, and the thing is agreed on. Raleigh and Essex are to attack Fayal. Essex sails away before Raleigh has watered. Raleigh follows as fast as he can, and at Fayal finds no Essex. He must water there, then and at once. His own veterans want him to attack forthwith, for the Spaniards are fortifying fast: but he will wait for Essex. Still no Essex comes. Raleigh attempts to water, is defied, finds himself 'in for it,' and takes the island out of hand in the most masterly fashion, to the infuriation of Essex. Good Lord Howard patches up the matter, and the hot-headed coxcomb is once more pacified. They go on to Graciosa, where Essex's weakness of will again comes out, and he does not take the island. Three rich Caracks, however, are picked up. 'Though we shall be little the better for them,' says Raleigh privately to Sir Arthur Gorges, his faithful captain, 'yet I am heartily glad for our

General's sake; because they will in great measure give content to her Majesty, so that there may be no repining against this poor Lord for the expense of the voyage."

Raleigh begins to see that Essex is only to be pitied; that the voyage is not over likely to end well: but he takes it, in spite of ill-usage, as a kind-hearted man should. Again Essex makes a fool of himself. They are to steer one way in order to intercept the Plate-fleet. Essex having agreed to the course pointed out, alters his course on a fancy; then alters it a second time, though the hapless Monson, with the whole Plate-fleet in sight, is hanging out lights, firing guns, and shrieking vainly for the General, who is gone on a new course, in which he might have caught the fleet after all, in spite of his two mistakes, but that he chooses to go a roundabout way instead of a short one; and away goes the whole fleet, save one Carack, which runs itself on shore and burns, and the game is played out, and lost.

All want Essex to go home, as the season is getting late: but the wilful and weak man will linger still, and while he is hovering to the south, Philip's armament has sailed from the Groyne, on the undefended shores of England, and only God's hand saves us from the effects of Essex's folly. A third time the Armadas of Spain are overwhelmed by the avenging tempests, and Essex returns to disgrace, having proved himself at once intemperate and incapable. Even in coming home there is confusion, and Essex is all but lost on the Bishop and Clerks, by Scilly, in spite of the warnings of Raleigh's sailing-master, 'Old Broadbent,' who is so exasperated

at the general stupidity that he wants Raleigh to leave Essex and his squadron to get out of their own scrape as they can.

Essex goes off to sulk at Wanstead; but Vere excuses him, and in a few days he comes back, and will needs fight good Lord Howard for being made Earl of Nottingham for his services against the Armada and at Cadiz. Baulked of this, he begins laying the blame of the failure at the Azores on Raleigh. Let the spoilt naughty boy take care; even that 'admirable temper' for which Raleigh is famed may be worn out at last.

These years are Raleigh's noon—stormy enough at best, yet brilliant. There is a pomp about him, outward and inward, which is terrible to others, dangerous to himself. One has gorgeous glimpses of that grand Durham House of his, with its carvings and its antique marbles, armorial escutcheons, 'beds with green silk hangings and legs like dolphins, overlaid with gold:' and the man himself, tall, beautiful, and graceful, perfect alike in body and in mind, walking to and fro, his beautiful wife upon his arm, his noble boy beside his knee, in his 'white satin doublet, embroidered with pearls, and a great chain of pearls about his neck,' lording it among the lords with an 'awfulness and ascendency above other mortals,' for which men say that 'his næve is, that he is damnable proud;' and no wonder. The reduced squire's younger son has gone forth to conquer the world; and he fancies, poor fool, that he has conquered it, just as it really has conquered him; and he will stand now on his blood and his

pedigree, (no bad one either,) and all the more stiffly because puppies like Lord Oxford, who instead of making their fortunes have squandered them, call him 'jack and upstart,' and make impertinent faces while the Queen is playing the virginals, about 'how when jacks go up, heads go down.' Proud? No wonder if the man be proud! 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?' And yet all the while he has the most affecting consciousness that all this is not God's will, but the will of the flesh; that the house of fame is not the house of God; that its floor is not the rock of ages, but the sea of glass mingled with fire, which may crack beneath him any moment, and let the nether flame burst up. He knows that he is living in a splendid lie; that he is not what God meant him to be. He longs to flee away and be at peace. It is to this period, not to his death-hour, that 'The Lie' belongs;* saddest of poems, with its melodious contempt and life-weariness. All is a lie—court, church, statesmen, courtiers, wit and science, town and country, all are shams; the days are evil; the canker is at the root of all things; the old heroes are dying one by one; the Elizabethan age is rotting down, as all human things do, and nothing is left but to bewail with Spenser 'The Ruins of Time;' the glory and virtue which have been—the greater glory and virtue which might be even now, if men would but arise and repent, and work righteousness, as their fathers did before them. But no. Even to such a world as this he will cling, and flaunt it about as captain of the guard in the Queen's

* It is to be found in a MS. of 1596.

progresses and masques and pageants, with sword-belt studded with diamonds and rubies, or at tournaments, in armour of solid silver, and a gallant train with orange-tawny feathers, provoking Essex to bring in a far larger train in the same colours, and swallow up Raleigh's pomp in his own, so achieving that famous 'feather-triumph' by which he gains little but bad blood and a good jest. For Essex is no better tilter than he is general; and having 'run very ill' in his orange-tawny, comes next day in green, and runs still worse, and yet is seen to be the same cavalier; whereon a spectator shrewdly observes that he changed his colours 'that it may be reported that there was one in green who ran worse than he in orange-tawny.' But enough of these toys, while God's handwriting is upon the wall above all heads.

Raleigh knows that the handwriting is there. The spirit which drove him forth to Virginia and Guiana is fallen asleep: but he longs for Sherborne and quiet country life, and escapes thither during Essex's imprisonment, taking Cecil's son with him, and writes as only he can write, about the shepherd's peaceful joys, contrasted with 'courts' and 'masques' and 'proud towers,'—

> Here are no false entrapping baits
> Too hasty for too hasty fates,
> Unless it be
> The fond credulity
> Of silly fish, that worlding who still look
> Upon the bait, but never on the hook;
> Nor envy, unless among
> The birds, for prize of their sweet song.

Go! let the diving negro seek
For pearls hid in some forlorn creek,
We all pearls scorn,
Save what the dewy morn
Congeals upon some little spire of grass,
Which careless shepherds beat down as they pass
And gold ne'er here appears
Save what the yellow Ceres bears.

Tragic enough are the after scenes of Raleigh's life: but most tragic of all are these scenes of vain-glory, in which he sees the better part, and yet chooses the worse, and pours out his self-discontent in song which proves the fount of delicacy and beauty which lies pure and bright beneath the gaudy artificial crust. What might not this man have been! And he knows that too. The stately rooms of Durham House pall on him, and he delights to hide up in his little study among his books and his chemical experiments, and smoke his silver pipe, and look out on the clear Thames and the green Surrey hills, and dream about Guiana and the Tropics; or to sit in the society of antiquaries with Selden and Cotton, Camden and Stow; or in his own Mermaid Club, with Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, and at last with Shakspeare's self, to hear and utter

'Words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest.'

Anything to forget the handwriting on the wall, which will not be forgotten. But he will do all the good which he can meanwhile, nevertheless. He will serve

God and Mammon. So complete a man will surely be able to do both. Unfortunately the thing is impossible, as he discovers too late: but he certainly goes as near success in the attempt as ever man did. Everywhere we find him doing justly and loving mercy. Wherever this man steps he leaves his foot-print ineffaceably in deeds of benevolence. For one year only, it seems, he is governor of Jersey; yet to this day, it is said, the islanders honour his name, only second to that of Duke Rollo, as their great benefactor, the founder of their Newfoundland trade. In the west country he is 'as a king,' 'with ears and mouth always open to hear and deliver their grievances, feet and hands ready to go and work their redress.' The tin-merchants have become usurers 'of fifty in the hundred.' Raleigh works till he has put down their 'abominable and cut-throat dealing.' There is a burdensome west-country tax on curing fish; Raleigh works till it is revoked. In Parliament he is busy with liberal measures, always before his generation. He puts down a foolish act for compulsory sowing of hemp, in a speech on the freedom of labour worthy of the nineteenth century. He argues against raising the subsidy from the three-pound men—'Call you this, Mr. Francis Bacon, par jugum, when a poor man pays as much as a rich?' He is equally rational and spirited against the exportation of ordnance to the enemy; and when the question of abolishing monopolies is mooted he has his wise word. He too is a monopolist of tin, as Lord Warden of the Stannaries. But he has so wrought as to bring good out of evil; for 'before the granting of

his patent, let the price of tin be never so high, the poor workman never had but two shillings a week;' yet now, so has he extended and organized the tin-works, 'that any man who will can find work, be tin at what price soever, and have four shillings a week truly paid. . . Yet if all others may be repealed, I will give my consent as freely to the cancelling of this, as any member of this house.' Most of the monopolies were repealed: but we do not find that Raleigh's was among them. Why should it be, if its issue was more tin, full work, and double wages? In all things this man approves himself faithful in his generation. His sins are not against man, but against God; such as the world thinks no sins; and hates them, not from morality, but from envy.

In the meanwhile, the evil which, so Spenser had prophesied, only waited Raleigh's death, breaks out in his absence, and Ireland is all aflame with Tyrone's rebellion. Raleigh is sent for. He will not accept the post of Lord Deputy, and go to put it down. Perhaps he does not expect fair play as long as Essex is at home. Perhaps he knows too much of the 'common weal, or rather common woe,' and thinks that what is crooked cannot be made straight. Perhaps he is afraid to lose by absence his ground at court. Would that he had gone, for Ireland's sake and his own. However, it must not be. Ormond is recalled, and Knollys shall be sent: but Essex will have none but Sir George Carew; whom, Naunton says, he hates, and wishes to oust from court. He and Elizabeth argue it out. He turns his back on her, and she gives him—or does not give him, for one

has found so many of these racy anecdotes vanish on inspection into simple wind, that one believes none of them—a box on the ear; which if she did, she did the most wise, just, and practical thing which she could do with such a puppy. He claps his hand—or does not—to his sword, 'He would not have taken it from Henry VIII.,' and is turned out forthwith. In vain Egerton, the Lord Keeper, tries to bring him to reason. He storms insanely. Everyone on earth is wrong but he: everyone is conspiring against him; he talks of 'Solomon's fool' too. Had he read the Proverbs a little more closely, he might have left the said fool alone, as being a too painfully exact likeness of himself. It ends by his being worsted, and Raleigh rising higher than ever. I cannot see why Raleigh should be represented as henceforth becoming Essex's 'avowed enemy,' save on the ground that all good men are and ought to be the enemies of bad men, when they see them about to do harm, and to ruin the country. Essex is one of the many persons upon whom this age has lavished a quantity of sentimentality, which suits oddly enough with its professions of impartiality. But there is an impartiality which ends in utter injustice; which by saying carelessly to every quarrel, 'Both are right, and both are wrong,' leaves only the impression that all men are wrong, and ends by being unjust to every one. So has Elizabeth and Essex's quarrel been treated. There was some evil in Essex; therefore Elizabeth was a fool for liking him. There was some good in Essex; therefore Elizabeth was cruel in punishing him. This is the

sort of slipshod dilemma by which Elizabeth is proved to be wrong, even while Essex is confessed to be wrong too; while the patent facts of the case are, that Elizabeth bore with him as long as she could, and a great deal longer than any one else could. Why Raleigh should be accused of helping to send Essex into Ireland, I do not know. Camden confesses (at the same time that he gives a hint of the kind) that Essex would let no one go but himself. And if this was his humour, one can hardly wonder at Cecil and Raleigh, as well as Elizabeth, bidding the man begone and try his hand at government, and be filled with the fruit of his own devices. He goes; does nothing; or rather worse than nothing; for in addition to the notorious ill-management of the whole matter, we may fairly say that he killed Elizabeth. She never held up her head again after Tyrone's rebellion. Elizabeth still clings to him, changing her mind about him every hour, and at last writes him such a letter as he deserves. He has had power, money, men, such as no one ever had before. Why has he done nothing but bring England to shame? He comes home frantically—the story of his bursting into the dressing-room rests on no good authority—with a party of friends at his heels, leaving Ireland to take care of itself. Whatever entertainment he met with from the fond old woman, he met with the coldness which he deserved from Raleigh and Cecil. Who can wonder? What had he done to deserve aught else? But he all but conquers; and Raleigh takes to his bed in consequence, sick of the whole matter; as one would have been inclined to do oneself. He is ex-

amined and arraigned; writes a maudlin letter to Elizabeth. Elizabeth has been called a fool for listening to such pathetical 'love letters': and then hard-hearted for not listening to them. Poor Lady! do what she would, she found it hard enough to please all parties while alive; must she be condemned over and above in æternum to be wrong whatsoever she did? Why is she not to have the benefit of the plain straightforward interpretation which would be allowed to any other human being; namely, that she approved of such fine talk, as long as it was proved to be sincere by fine deeds: but that when these were wanting, the fine talk became hollow, fulsome, a fresh cause of anger and disgust? Yet still she weeps over Essex when he falls sick, as any mother would; and would visit him if she could with honour. But a 'malignant influence counteracts every disposition to relent.' No doubt, a man's own folly, passion, and insolence, has generally a very malignant influence on his fortunes; and he may consider himself a very happy man if all that befalls to him thereby is what befell Essex, namely, deprivation of his offices, and imprisonment in his own house. He is forgiven after all; but the spoilt child refuses his bread and butter without sugar. What is the pardon to him without a renewal of his licence of sweet wines? Because he is not to have that, the Queen's 'conditions are as crooked as her carcase.' Flesh and blood can stand no more, and ought to stand no more. After all that Elizabeth has been to him, that speech is the speech of a brutal and ungrateful nature. And such he shows himself to be in the hour

of trial. What if the patent for sweet wines is refused him? Such gifts were meant as the reward of merit; and what merit has he to show? He never thinks of that. Blind with fury, he begins to intrigue with James, and slanders to him, under colour of helping his succession, all whom he fancies opposed to him. What is worse, he intrigues with Tyrone about bringing over an army of Irish Papists to help him against the Queen, and this at the very time that his sole claim to popularity rests on his being the leader of the Puritans. A man must have been very far gone, either in baseness or in hatred, who represents Raleigh to James as dangerous to the commonweal, on account of his great power in the west of England and Jersey, 'places fit for the Spaniard to land in.' Cobham, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, is included in his slander; and both he and Raleigh will hear of it again.

Some make much of a letter, supposed to be written about this time by Raleigh to Cecil, bidding Cecil keep down Essex, even crush him, now that he is once down. I do not happen to think the letter to be Raleigh's. His initials are subscribed to it; but not his name; and the style is not like his. But as for seeing 'unforgiveness and revenge in it,' whose soever it may be, I hold and say there is not a word which can bear such a construction. It is a dark letter: but about a dark matter, and a dark man. It is a worldly and expedientiel letter, appealing to low motives in Cecil, though for a right end; such a letter, in short, as statesmen are wont to write now-a-days. If Raleigh

wrote it, God punished him for doing so speedily enough. He does not usually punish statesmen now-a-days for such letters; perhaps because He does not love them as well as Raleigh. But as for the letter itself. Essex is called a 'tyrant,' because he had shown himself one. The Queen is to 'hold Bothwell,' because 'while she hath him, he will even be the canker of her estate and safety,' and the writer has 'seen the last of her good days, and of ours after his liberty.' On which accounts, Cecil is not to be deterred from doing what is right and necessary 'by any fear of after-revenges,' and 'conjectures from causes remote,' as many a stronger instance—given—will prove, but 'look to the present,' and so 'do wisely.' There is no real cause for Cecil's fear. If the man who has now lost a power which he ought never to have had, be now kept down, then neither he nor his son will ever be able to harm the man who has kept him at his just level. What 'revenge, selfishness, and craft' there can be in all this, it is difficult to see; as difficult as to see why Essex is to be talked of as 'unfortunate,' and the blame of his frightful end thrown on everyone but himself: the fact being, that Essex's end was brought on by his having chosen one Sunday morning for breaking out into open rebellion, for the purpose of seizing the city of London and the Queen's person, and compelling her to make him lord and master of the British isles; in which attempt he and his fought with the civil and military authorities, till artillery had to be brought up and many lives were lost. Such little escapades may be

pardonable enough in 'noble and unfortunate' earls: but readers will perhaps agree that if they chose to try a similar experiment, they could not complain if they found themselves shortly after in company with Mr. Mitchell at Spike Island, or Mr. Oxford in Bedlam. However, those were days in which such Sabbath amusements on the part of one of the most important and powerful personages of the realm could not be passed over so lightly, especially when accompanied by severe loss of life; and as there existed in England certain statutes concerning rebellion and high treason, which must needs have been framed for some purpose or other, the authorities of England may be excused for fancying that they bore some reference to such acts as that which the noble and unfortunate earl had just committed, as wantonly, selfishly, and needlessly, it seems to me, as ever did man on earth.

I may seem to jest too much upon so solemn a matter as the life of a human being: but if I am not to touch the popular talk about Essex in this tone, I can only touch it in a far sterner one; and if ridicule is forbidden, express disgust instead.

I have entered into this matter of Essex somewhat at length, because on it is founded one of the mean slanders from which Raleigh never completely recovered. The very mob who, after Raleigh's death, made him a Protestant martyr—as, indeed, he was—looked upon Essex in the same light, hated Raleigh as the cause of his death, and accused him of glutting his eyes with Essex's misery, puffing tobacco out of a window,

and what not—all mere inventions, so Raleigh declared upon the scaffold. He was there in his office, as captain of the guard, and could do no less than be there. Essex, it is said, asked for Raleigh just before he died: but Raleigh had withdrawn, the mob having murmured. What had Essex to say to him? Was it, asks Oldys, shrewdly enough, to ask him pardon for the wicked slanders which he had been pouring into James's credulous and cowardly ears? We will hope so; and leave poor Essex to God and the mercy of God, asserting once more, that no man ever brought ruin and death more thoroughly on himself by his own act, needing no imaginary help downwards from Raleigh, Cecil, or other human being.

And now begins the fourth act of this strange tragedy. Queen Elizabeth dies; and dies of grief. It has been the fashion to attribute to her, I know not why, remorse for Essex's death; and the foolish and false tale about Lady Nottingham and the ring has been accepted as history. The fact seems to be that she never really held up her head after Burleigh's death. She could not speak of him without tears; forbade his name to be mentioned in the Council. No wonder; never had mistress a better servant. For nearly half a century have these two noble souls loved each other, trusted each other, worked with each other; and God's blessing has been on their deeds; and now the faithful God-fearing man is gone to his reward; and she is growing old, and knows that the ancient fire is dying out in her; and who will be to her what

he was? Buckhurst is a good man, and one of her old pupils; and she makes him Lord Treasurer in Burleigh's place: but beyond that, all is dark. 'I am a miserable forlorn woman; there is none about me that I can trust.' She sees through Cecil; through Henry Howard. Essex has proved himself worthless, and pays the penalty of his sins. Men are growing worse than their fathers. Spanish gold is bringing in luxury and sin. The last ten years of her reign are years of decadence, profligacy, falsehood; and she cannot but see it. Tyrone's rebellion is the last drop which fills the cup. After fifty years of war, after a drain of money all but fabulous, expended on keeping Ireland quiet, the volcano bursts forth again just as it seemed extinguished, more fiercely than ever, and the whole work has to be done over again, when there is neither time, nor a man, to do it. And ahead, what hope is there for England? Who will be her successor? She knows in her heart that it will be James: but she cannot bring herself to name him. To bequeath the fruit of all her labours to a tyrant, a liar, and a coward: for she knows the man but too well. It is too hideous to be faced. This is the end, then? 'Oh that I were a milke maide, with a paile upon mine arm!' But it cannot be. It never could have been; and she must endure to the end.

'Therefore I hated life; yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it to the man that shall be after me. And who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet

shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have showed myself wise, in wisdom, and knowledge, and equity. . . . Vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit!' And so, with a whole book of Ecclesiastes written on that mighty heart, the old lioness coils herself up in her lair, refuses food, and dies. I know few passages in the world's history more tragic than that death.

Why did she not trust Raleigh? First, because Raleigh, as we have seen, was not the sort of man whom she needed. He was not the steadfast single-eyed statesman; but the many-sided genius. Besides, he was the ringleader of the war-party. And she, like Burleigh before his death, was tired of the war; saw that it was demoralizing England; was anxious for peace. Raleigh would not see that. It was to him a divine mission which must be fulfilled at all risks. As long as the Spaniards were opposing the Indians, conquering America, there must be no peace. Both were right from their own point of view. God ordered the matter from a third point of view.

Besides, we know that Essex, and after him Cecil and Henry Howard, had been slandering Raleigh basely to James. Can we doubt that the same poison had been poured into Elizabeth's ears? She might distrust Cecil too much to act upon what he said of Raleigh; and yet distrust Raleigh too much to put the kingdom into his hands. However, she is gone now, and a new king has arisen, who knoweth not Joseph.

James comes down to take possession. Insolence,

luxury, and lawlessness mark his first steps on his going amid the adulations of a fallen people; he hangs a poor wretch without trial; wastes his time in hunting by the way;—a bad and base man, whose only redeeming point—if in his case it be one—is his fondness for little children. But that will not make a king. The wiser elders take counsel together. Raleigh and good Judge Fortescue are for requiring conditions from the new-comer; and constitutional liberty makes its last stand among the men of Devon, the old county of warriors, discoverers, and statesmen, of which Queen Bess had said, that the men of Devon were her right hand. But in vain; James has his way; Cecil and Henry Howard are willing enough to give it him.

So down comes Rehoboam, taking counsel with the young men, and makes answer to England, 'My father chastised you with whips; but I will chastise you with scorpions.' He takes a base pleasure, shocking to the French ambassador, in sneering at the memory of Queen Elizabeth; a perverse delight in honouring every rascal whom she had punished. Tyrone must come to England to be received into favour, maddening the soul of honest Sir John Harrington. Essex is christened 'my martyr,' apparently for having plotted treason against Elizabeth with Tyrone. Raleigh is received with a pun—'By my soul, I have heard rawly of thee, mon;' and when the great nobles and gentlemen come to court with their retinues, James tries to hide his dread of them in an insult: pooh-poohs their splendour, and says, 'he doubts not that he should have been able

to win England for himself, had they kept him out.' Raleigh answers boldly, 'Would God that had been put to the trial.' 'Why?' 'Because then you would have known your friends from your foes.' 'A reason,' says old Aubrey, 'never forgotten or forgiven.' Aubrey is no great authority; but the speech smacks so of Raleigh's offhand daring, that one cannot but believe it; as one does also the other story of his having advised the lords to keep out James and erect a republic. Not that he could have been silly enough to propose such a thing seriously at that moment; but that he most likely, in his bold way, may have said, 'Well, if we are to have this man in without conditions, better a republic at once.' Which, if he did say, he said what the next forty years proved to be strictly true. However, he will go on his own way as best he can. If James will give him a loan, he and the rest of the old heroes will join, fit out a fleet against Spain, and crush her, now that she is tottering and impoverished, once and for ever. But James has no stomach for fighting; cannot abide the sight of a drawn sword; would not provoke Spain for the world—why, they might send Jesuits and assassinate him; and as for the money, he wants that for very different purposes. So the answer which he makes to Raleigh's proposal of war against Spain, is to send him to the Tower, and sentence him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, on a charge of plotting with Spain.

Having read, I believe, nearly all that has been written on the subject of this dark 'Cobham plot,' I

find but one thing come brightly out of the infinite confusion and mystery, which will never be cleared up till the day of judgment, and that is Raleigh's innocence. He, and all England, and the very men who condemned him, knew that he was innocent. Every biographer is forced to confess this, more or less, in spite of all efforts to be what is called 'impartial.' So I shall waste no words upon the matter, only observing, that whereas Raleigh is said to have slandered Cecil to James, in the same way that Cecil had slandered him, one passage of this Cobham plot disproves utterly such a story, which after all, rests (as far as I know) only on hearsay, being 'spoken of in a manuscript written by one Buck, secretary to Chancellor Egerton.' For in writing to his own wife, in the expectation of immediate death, Raleigh speaks of Cecil in a very different tone, as one in whom he trusted most, and who has left him in the hour of need. I ask the reader to peruse that letter, and say whether any man would write thus, with death and judgment before his face, of one whom he knew that he had betrayed; or, indeed, of one who he knew had betrayed him. I see no reason to doubt that Raleigh kept good faith with Cecil, and that he was ignorant till after his trial that Cecil was in the plot against him.

I do not care to enter into the tracasseries of this Cobham plot. Everyone knows them; no one can unravel them. The moral and spiritual significance of the fact is more interesting than all questions as to Cobham's lies, Brooke's lies, Aremberg's lies,

Coke's lies, James's lies:—Let the dead bury their dead. It is the broad aspect of the thing which is so wonderful; to see how

> The eagle, towering in his pride of place,
> Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

This is the man who six months ago, perhaps, thought that he and Cecil were to rule England together, while all else were the puppets whose wires they pulled. 'The Lord hath taken him up and dashed him down;' and by such means, too, and on such a charge! Betraying his country to Spain! Absurd—incredible—he would laugh it to scorn: but it is bitter earnest. There is no escape. True or false, he sees that his enemies will have his head. It is maddening: a horrible nightmare. He cannot bear it; he cannot face—so he writes to that beloved wife—'the scorn, the taunts, the loss of honour, the cruel words of lawyers.' He stabs himself. Read that letter of his, written after the mad blow had been struck; it is sublime from intensity of agony. The way in which the chastisement was taken proves how utterly it was needed, ere that proud, success-swollen, world-entangled heart could be brought right with God.

And it is brought right. The wound is not mortal. He comes slowly to a better mind, and takes his doom like a man. That first farewell to his wife was written out of hell. The second rather out of heaven. Read it, too, and compare; and then see how the Lord has been working upon this great soul: infinite sadness, infinite

tenderness and patience, and trust in God for himself and his poor wife: 'God is my witness, it was for you and yours that I desired life; but it is true that I disdain myself for begging it. For know, dear wife, that your son is the son of a true man, and one who, in his own respect, despiseth death and all his ugly and misshapen forms. . . . The everlasting, powerful, infinite, and omnipotent God, who is goodness itself, the true life and light, keep thee and thine, have mercy upon me, and teach me to forgive my persecutors and accusers, and send us to meet in His glorious kingdom.'

Is it come to this, then? Is he fit to die at last? Then he is fit to live; and live he shall. The tyrants have not the heart to carry out their own crime, and Raleigh shall be respited.

But not pardoned. No more return for him into that sinful world, where he flaunted on the edge of the precipice, and dropped heedless over it. God will hide him in the secret place of His presence, and keep him in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues; and a new life shall begin for him; a wiser, perhaps a happier, than he has known since he was a little lad in the farm-house in pleasant Devon far away. On the 15th of December he enters the Tower. Little dreams he that for more than twelve years those doleful walls would be his home. Lady Raleigh obtains leave to share his prison with him, and, after having passed ten years without a child, brings him a boy to comfort the weary heart. The child of sorrow is christened Carew. Little think those around him what strange things that child will see before his

hairs be grey. She has her maid, and he his three servants; some five or six friends are allowed 'to repair to him at convenient times.' He has a chamber-door always open into the lieutenant's garden, where he 'has converted a little hen-house into a still-room, and spends his time all the day in distillation.' The next spring a grant is made of his goods and chattels, forfeited by attainder, to trustees named by himself, for the benefit of his family. So far, so well; or, at least, not as ill as it might be: but there are those who cannot leave the caged lion in peace.

Sanderson, who had married his niece, instead of paying up the arrears which he owes on the wine and other offices, brings in a claim of 2,000*l.* But the rogue meets his match, and finds himself, at the end of a lawsuit, in prison for debt. Greater rogues, however, will have better fortune, and break through the law-cobwebs which have stopped a poor little fly like Sanderson. For Carr, afterwards Lord Somerset, casts his eyes on the Sherborne land. It has been included in the conveyance, and should be safe; but there are others who, by instigation surely of the devil himself, have had eyes to see a flaw in the deed. Sir John Popham is appealed to. Who could doubt the result? He answers, that there is no doubt that the words were omitted by the inattention of the engrosser —Carew Raleigh says that but one single word was wanting, which word was found notwithstanding in the paper-book, *i.e.* the draft—but that the word not being there, the deed is worthless, and the devil may have

his way. To Carr, who has nothing of his own, it seems reasonable enough to help himself to what belongs to others, and James gives him the land. Raleigh writes to him, gently, gracefully, loftily. Here is an extract: 'And for yourself, sir, seeing your fair day is now in the dawn, and mine drawn to the evening, your own virtues, and the king's grace assuring you of many favours and much honour, I beseech you not to begin your first building upon the ruins of the innocent; and that their sorrows, with mine, may not attend your first plantation.' He speaks strongly of the fairness, sympathy, and pity, by which the Scots in general had laid him under obligation; argues from it his own evident innocence; and ends with a quiet warning to the young favourite, not to 'undergo the curse of them that enter into the fields of the fatherless.' In vain. Lady Raleigh, with her children, entreats James, on her knees: in vain, again. 'I mun ha' the land,' is the answer; 'I mun ha' it for Carr.' And he has it; patching up the matter after a while by a gift of 8,000*l.* to her and her elder son, in requital for an estate of 5,000*l.* a year.

So there sits Raleigh, growing poorer day by day, and clinging more and more to that fair wife, and her noble boy, and the babe whose laughter makes music within that dreary cage. And all day long, as we have seen, he sits over his still, compounding and discovering, and sometimes showing himself on the wall to the people, who gather to gaze at him, till Wade forbids it, fearing popular feeling. In fact, the

world outside has a sort of mysterious awe of him, as if he were a chained magician, who, if he were let loose, might do with them all what he would. Certain great nobles are of the same mind. Woe to them if that silver tongue should once again be unlocked!

The Queen, with a woman's faith in greatness, sends to him for 'cordials.' Here is one of them famous in Charles the Second's days as 'Sir Walter's Cordial:'—

℞ Zedoary and Saffron, each	½ lb.
Distilled water	3 pints.
Macerate, &c., and reduce to 1½ pint.	
Compound powder of crabs' claws	16 oz.
Cinnamon and Nutmegs	2 ,,
Cloves	1 ,,
Cardamom seeds	½ ,,
Double refined sugar	2 lb.
Make a confection.	

Which, so the world believes, will cure all ills which flesh is heir to. It does not seem that Raleigh so boasted himself; but the people, after the fashion of the time, seem to have called all his medicines 'cordials,' and probably took for granted that it was by this particular one that the enchanter cured Queen Anne of a desperate sickness, 'whereof the physicians were at the farthest end of their studies' (no great way to go in those days) 'to find the cause, and at a nonplus for the cure.'

Raleigh—this is Sir Anthony Welden's account, which may go for what it is worth—asks for his reward, only justice. Will the Queen ask that certain lords

may be sent to examine Cobham, 'whether he had at any time accused Sir Walter of any treason under his hand?' Six are sent. Cobham answers, 'Never; nor could I: that villain Wade often solicited me, and not so prevailing, got me by a trick to write my name on a piece of white paper. So that if a charge came under my hand it was forged by that villain Wade, by writing something above my hand, without my consent or knowledge.' They return. An equivocation was ready. 'Sir, my Lord Cobham has made good all that ever he wrote or said;' having, by his own account, written nothing but his name. This is Sir Anthony Welden's story. One hopes, for the six lords' sake, it may not be true; but there is no reason, in the morality of James's court, why it should not have been.

So Raleigh must remain where he is, and work on. And he does work. As his captivity becomes more and more hopeless, so comes out more and more the stateliness, self-help, and energy of the man. Till now he has played with his pen: now he will use it in earnest; and use it as few prisoners have done. Many a good book has been written in a dungeon—'Don Quixote,' the 'Pilgrim's Progress:' beautiful each in its way, and destined to immortality: Raleigh begins the 'History of the World,' the most God-fearing and God-seeing history which I know of among English writings; though blotted by flattery of James in the preface: wrong: but pardonable in a man trying in the Tower to get out of that doleful prison. But all his writings are thirty years too late; they express the creed of a

buried generation, of the men who defied Spain in the name of a God of righteousness,—not of men who cringe before her in the name of a God of power and cunning. The captive eagle has written with a quill from his own wing—a quill which has been wont ere now to soar to heaven. Every line smacks of the memories of Nombre and of Zutphen, of Tilbury Fort and of Calais Roads; and many a grey-headed veteran, as he read them, must have turned away his face to hide the noble tears, as Ulysses from Demodocus when he sang the song of Troy. So there sits Raleigh, like the prophet of old, in his lonely tower above the Thames, watching the darkness gather upon the land year by year, 'like the morning spread over the mountains,' the darkness which comes before the dawn of the Day of The Lord; which he shall never see on earth, though it be very near at hand; and asks of each newcomer, 'Watchman, what of the night?'

But there is one bright point at least in the darkness; one on whom Raleigh's eyes, and those of all England, are fixed in boundless hope; one who, by the sympathy which attracts all noble natures to each other, clings to the hero utterly; Henry, the Crown Prince. 'No king but my father would keep such a bird in a cage.' The noble lad tries to open the door for the captive eagle; but in vain. At least he will make what use he can of his wisdom. He asks him for advice about the new ship he is building, and has a simple practical letter in return, and over and above probably the two valuable pamphlets, 'Of the Invention

of Ships,' and 'Observations on the Navy and Sea Service;' which the Prince will never see. In 1611 he asks Raleigh's advice about the foolish double marriage with the Prince and Princess of Savoy, and receives for answer two plain-spoken discourses as full of historical learning as of practical sound sense.

These are benefits which must be repaid. The father will repay them hereafter in his own way. In the meanwhile the son does so in his way, by soliciting the Sherborne estate as for himself, intending to restore it to Raleigh. He succeeds. Carr is bought off for 25,000*l.*, where Lady Raleigh has been bought off with 8,000*l.*; but neither Raleigh nor his widow will ever be the better for that bargain, and Carr will get Sherborne back again, and probably, in the king's silly dotage, keep the 25,000*l.* also.

In November, 1612, Prince Henry falls sick.

When he is at the last gasp, the poor Queen sends to Raleigh for some of the same cordial which had cured her. Medicine is sent, with a tender letter, as it well might be; for Raleigh knew how much hung, not only for himself, but for England, on the cracking threads of that fair young life. It is questioned at first whether it shall be administered. 'The cordial,' Raleigh says, 'will cure him or any other of a fever, except in case of poison.'

The cordial is administered: but it comes too late. The prince dies, and with him the hopes of all good men.

* * * * *

At last, after twelve years of prison, Raleigh is free. He is sixty-six years old now, grey-headed and worn down by confinement, study, and want of exercise: but he will not remember that.

Still in his ashes live their wonted fire.

Now for Guiana, at last! which he has never forgotten; to which he has been sending, with his slender means, ship after ship to keep the Indians in hope.

He is freed in March. At once he is busy at his project. In August he has obtained the King's commission, by the help of Sir Ralph Winwood, Secretary of State, who seems to have believed in Raleigh. At least Raleigh believed in him. In March next year he has sailed, and with him thirteen ships, and more than a hundred knights and gentlemen, and among them, strange to say, Sir Warham St. Leger. This is certainly not the quondam Marshal of Munster, under whom Raleigh served at Smerwick, six-and-thirty years ago. He would be nearly eighty years old; and as Lord Doneraile's pedigree gives three Sir Warhams, we cannot identify the man. But it is a strong argument in Raleigh's favour that a St. Leger, of a Devon family, which had served with him in Ireland, and intimately connected with him his whole life, should keep his faith in Raleigh after all his reverses. Nevertheless, the mere fact of an unpardoned criminal, said to be 'non ens' in law, being able in a few months to gather round him such a party, is proof patent of what slender grounds there are for calling Raleigh 'suspected' and 'unpopular.'

But he does not sail without a struggle or two. James is too proud to allow his heir to match with any but a mighty king, is infatuated about the Spanish marriage; and Gondomar is with him, playing with his hopes and with his fears also.

The people are furious; and have to be silenced again and again: there is even fear of rioting. The charming and smooth-tongued Gondomar can hate; and can revenge, too. Five 'prentices, who have insulted him for striking a little child, are imprisoned and fined several hundred pounds each. And as for hating Raleigh, Gondomar had been no Spaniard (to let alone the private reasons which some have supposed) had he not hated Spain's ancient scourge and unswerving enemy. He comes to James, complaining that Raleigh is about to break the peace with Spain. Nothing is to be refused him which can further the one darling fancy of James; and Raleigh has to give in writing the number of his ships, men, and ordnance, and, moreover, the name of the country and the very river whither he is going. This paper was given, Carew Releigh asserts positively, under James's solemn promise not to reveal it; and Raleigh himself seems to have believed that it was to be kept private; for he writes afterwards to Secretary Winwood in a tone of astonishment and indignation, that the information contained in his paper had been sent on to the King of Spain before he sailed from the Thames. Winwood could have told him as much already; for Buckingham had written to Winwood, on March 28, to ask him why he had not been to the Spanish Ambas-

sador 'to acquaint him with the order taken by his Majesty about Sir W. R.'s voyage.' But however unwilling the Secretary (as one of the furtherers of the voyage) may have been to meddle in the matter, Gondomar had had news enough from another source; perhaps from James's own mouth. For the first letter to the West Indies, about Raleigh, was dated from Madrid, March 19; and most remarkable it is, that in James's 'Declaration,' or rather apology, for his own conduct, no mention whatsoever is made of his having given information to Gondomar.

Gondomar offered, says James, to let Raleigh go with one or two ships only. He might work a mine, and the King of Spain would give him a safe convoy home with all his gold. How kind. And how likely would Raleigh and his fellow-adventurers have been to accept such an offer; how likely, too, to find men who would sail with them on such an errand, to be 'flayed alive,' as many who travelled to the Indies of late years had been, or to have their throats cut, tied back to back, after trading unarmed and peaceably for a month, as thirty-six of Raleigh's men had been but two or three years before in that very Orinoco. So James is forced to let the large fleet go; and to let it go well armed also; for the plain reason, that otherwise it dare not go at all; and in the meanwhile, letters are sent from Spain, in which the Spaniards call the fleet 'English enemies,' and ships and troops are moved up as fast as possible from the Spanish main.

But, say some, James was justified in telling Gondo-

mar, and the Spaniards in defending themselves. On the latter point there is no doubt.

> They may get who have the will,
> And they may keep who can.

But it does seem hard on Raleigh, after having laboured in this Guiana business for years, and after having spent his money in vain attempts to deliver these Guianians from their oppressors. It is hard, and he feels it so. He sees that he is not trusted; that, as James himself confesses, his pardon is refused simply to keep a hold on him; that, if he fails, he is ruined.

As he well asks afterwards, 'If the king did not think that Guiana was his, why let me go thither at all? He knows that it was his by the law of nations, for he made Mr. Harcourt a grant of part of it. If it be, as Gondomar says, the King of Spain's, then I had no more right to work a mine in it than to burn a town.' An argument which seems to me unanswerable. But, says James, and others with him, he was forbid to meddle with any country occupate or possessed by Spaniards. Southey, too, blames him severely for not having told James that the country was already settled by Spaniards. I can excuse Southey, but not James, for overlooking the broad fact, that all England knew it, as I have shown, since 1594; that if they did not, Gondomar would have taken care to tell them; and that he could not go to Guiana without meddling with Spaniards. His former voyages and publications made no secret of it. On the contrary, one chief argument for the plan

had been all through the delivery of the Indians from these very Spaniards, who, though they could not conquer them, ill-used them in every way: and in his agreement with the Lords about the Guiana voyage in 1611, he makes especial mention of the very place which will soon fill such a part in our story, 'San Thomé, where the Spaniards inhabit,' and tells the Lords whom to ask, as to the number of men who will be wanted 'to secure Keymish's passage to the mine' against these very Spaniards. What can be more clear, save to those who will not see?

The plain fact is, that Raleigh went, with his eyes open, to take possession of a country to which he believed that he and King James had a right, and that James and his favourites, when they, as he pleads, might have stopped him by a word, let him go, knowing as well as the Spaniards what he intended; for what purpose, but to have an excuse for the tragedy which ended all, it is difficult to conceive. 'It is evident,' wisely says Sir Robert Schomburgk, 'that they winked at consequences which they must have foreseen.'

And here Mr. Napier, on the authority of Count Desmarets, brings a grave charge against Raleigh. Raleigh, in his Apology, protests that he only saw Desmarets once on board of his vessel. Desmarets says in his despatches, that he was on board of her several times—whether he saw Raleigh more than once does not appear,—and that Raleigh complained to him of having been unjustly imprisoned, stripped of his estate, and so forth; and that he was on that account

resolved to abandon his country, and, if the expedition succeeded, offer himself and the fruit of his labour to the King of France.

If this be true, Raleigh was very wrong. But Sir Robert Schomburgk points out that this passage, which Mr. Napier says occurs in the last despatch, was written a month after Raleigh had sailed; and that the previous despatch, written only four days after Raleigh sailed, says nothing about the matter. So that it could not have been a very important or fixed resolution on Raleigh's part, if it was only to be recollected a month after. I do not say—as Sir Robert Schomburgk is very much inclined to do—that it was altogether a bubble of French fancy. It is possible that Raleigh, in his just rage at finding that James was betraying him and sending him out with a halter round his neck, to all but certain ruin, did say wild words—That it was better for him to serve the Frenchman than such a master—that perhaps he might go over to the Frenchman after all—or some folly of the kind, in that same rash tone which, as we have seen, has got him into trouble so often already: and so I leave the matter, saying, Beware of making any man an offender for a word, much less one who is being hunted to death in his old age, and knows it.

However this may be, the fleet sails; but with no bright auguries. The mass of the sailors are 'a scum of men;' they are mutinous and troublesome; and what is worse, have got among them (as, perhaps, they were intended to have) the notion that Raleigh's being

still 'non ens' in law absolves them from obeying him when they do not choose, and permits them to say of him behind his back what they list. They have long delays at Plymouth. Sir Warham's ship cannot get out of the Thames. Pennington, at the Isle of Wight, 'cannot redeem his bread from the bakers,' and has to ride back to London to get money from Lady Raleigh. The poor lady has it not, and gives a note of hand to Mr. Wood, of Portsmouth. Alas for her! She has sunk her 8,000*l.*, and, beside that sold her Wickham estate for 2,500*l*; and all is on board the fleet. 'A hundred pieces' are all the ready money the hapless pair had left on earth, and they have parted them together. Raleigh has fifty-five, and she forty-five, till God send it back—if, indeed, He ever send it. The star is sinking low in the west. Trouble on trouble. Sir John Fane has neither men nor money; Captain Witney has not provisions enough, and Raleigh has to sell his plate in Plymouth to help him. Courage! one last struggle to redeem his good name.

Then storms off Scilly—a pinnace is sunk; faithful Captain King drives back into Bristol; the rest have to lie by a while in some Irish port for a fair wind. Then Bailey deserts with the Southampton at the Canaries; then 'unnatural weather,' so that a fourteen days' voyage takes forty days. Then 'the distemper' breaks out under the line. The simple diary of that sad voyage still remains, full of curious and valuable nautical hints; but recording the loss of friend on friend; four or five officers, and, 'to our great grief, our

principal refiner, Mr. Fowler.' 'Crab, my old servant.' Next a lamentable twenty-four hours, in which they lose Pigott, the lieutenant-general, 'mine honest frinde, Mr. John Talbot, one that had lived with me a leven yeeres in the Tower, an excellent general skoller, and a faithful and true man as ever lived,' with two 'very fair conditioned gentleman,' and 'mine own cook Francis.' Then more officers and men, and my 'cusen Payton.' Then the water is near spent, and they are forced to come to half allowance, till they save and drink greedily whole canfuls of the bitter rain water. At last Raleigh's own turn comes; running on deck in a squall, he gets wet through, and has twenty days of burning fever; 'never man suffered a more furious heat,' during which he eats nothing but now and then a stewed prune.

At last they make the land, at the month of the Urapoho, far south of their intended goal. They ask for Leonard the Indian, 'who lived with me in England three or four years, the same man that took Mr. Harcourt's brother, and fifty men, when they were in extreme distress, and had no means to live there but by the help of this Indian, whom they made believe that they were my men;' but the faithful Indian is gone up the country, and they stand away for Cayenne, 'where the cacique (Harry) was also my servant, and had lived with me in the Tower two years.'

Courage once more, brave old heart! Here at least thou art among friends, who know thee for what thou art, and look out longingly for thee as their deliverer.

Courage; for thou art in fairyland once more; the land of boundless hope and possibility. Though England and England's heart be changed, yet God's earth endures, and the harvest is still here, waiting to be reaped by those who dare. Twenty stormy years may have changed thee, but they have not changed the fairyland of thy prison dreams. Still the mighty Ceiba trees with their wealth of parasites and creepers tower above the palm-fringed islets; still the dark mangrove thickets guard the mouths of unknown streams, whose granite sands are rich with gold. Friendly Indians come, and Harry with them, bringing maize, peccari pork, and armadillos, plantains and pine-apples, and all eat and gather strength; and Raleigh writes home to his wife, 'to say that I may yet be King of the Indians here, were a vanity. But my name hath lived among them'—as well it might. For many a year those simple hearts shall look for him in vain, and more than two centuries and a half afterwards, dim traditions of the great white chief who bade them stand out to the last against the Spaniards, and he would come and dwell among them, shall linger among the Carib tribes; even, say some, the tattered relics of an English flag, which he left among them that they might distinguish his countrymen.

Happy for him had he stayed there indeed, and been their king. How easy for him to have grown old in peace at Cayenne. But no; he must on for honour's sake, and bring home if it were but a basketful of that ore, to show the king, that he may save his credit.

He has promised Arundel that he will return. And return he will. So onward he goes to the 'Triangle Islands.' There he sends off five small vessels for the Orinoco, with four hundred men. The faithful Keymis has to command and guide the expedition. Sir Warham is lying ill of the fever, all but dead: so George Raleigh is sent in his place as sergeant-major, and with him five land companies, one of which is commanded by young Walter, Raleigh's son; another by a Captain Parker, of whom we shall have a word to say presently.

Keymis's orders are explicit. He is to go up; find the mine, and open it; and if the Spaniards attack him, repel force by force: but he is to avoid, if possible, an encounter with them: not for fear of breaking the peace, but because he has 'a scum of men, a few gentlemen excepted, and I would not for all the world receive a blow from the Spaniards to the dishonour of our nation.' There we have no concealment of hostile instructions, any more than in Raleigh's admirable instructions to his fleet, which after laying down excellent laws for morality, religion, and discipline, go on with clause after clause as to what is to be done if they meet 'the enemy.' What enemy? Why, all Spanish ships which sail the seas; and who, if they happen to be sufficiently numerous, will assuredly attack, sink, burn and destroy Raleigh's whole squadron, for daring to sail for that continent which Spain claims as its own.

Raleigh runs up the coast to Trinidad once more, in through the Serpent's Mouth, and round Punto Gallo to

the lake of Pitch, where all recruit themselves with fish and armadillos, 'pheasant' (Penelope), 'palmitos' (Moriche palm fruit?), and guavas, and await the return of the expedition from the last day of December to the middle of February. They see something of the Spaniards meanwhile. Sir John Ferns is sent up to Port of Spain to try if they will trade for tobacco. The Spaniards parley; in the midst of the parley pour a volley of musketry into them at forty paces, yet hurt never a man; and send them off calling them thieves and traitors. Fray Simon's Spanish account of the matter is, that Raleigh intended to disembark his men, that they might march inland on San Joseph. He may be excused for the guess; seeing that Raleigh had done the very same thing some seventeen years before. If Raleigh was treacherous then, his treason punished itself now. However, I must believe that Raleigh is not likely to have told a lie for his own private amusement in his own private diary.

On the 29th, the Spaniards attack three men and a boy who are ashore boiling the fossil pitch; kill one man, and carry off the boy. Raleigh, instead of going up to Port of Spain and demanding satisfaction, as he would have been justified in doing after this second attack, remains quietly where he is, expecting daily to be attacked by Spanish armadas, and resolved to 'burn by their sides.' Happily, or unhappily, he escapes them. Probably he thinks they waited for him at Margarita, expecting him to range the Spanish main.

At last the weary days of sickness and anxiety succeed to days of terror. On the 1st of February a strange report comes by an Indian. An inland savage has brought confused and contradictory news down the river, that San Thomé is sacked, the governor and two Spanish captains slain (names given), and two English captains, nameless. After this entry follow a few confused ones, set down as happening in January, concerning attempts to extract the truth from the Indians, and the negligence of the mariners, who are diligent in nothing but pillaging and stealing. And so ends abruptly this sad document.

The truth comes at last;—but when, does not appear, in a letter from Keymis, dated January 8. San Thomé has been stormed, sacked, and burnt. Four refiners' houses were found in it; the best in the town; so that the Spaniards have been mining there; but no coin or bullion except a little plate. One English captain is killed, and that captain is Walter Raleigh, his first-born. He died leading them on, when some 'more careful of valour and safety, began to recoil shamefully.' His last words were, 'Lord have mercy upon me, and prosper our enterprise.' A Spanish captain, Erinetta, struck him down with the butt of a musket after he had received a bullet. John Plessington, his sergeant, avenged him by running Erinetta through with his halbert.

Keymis has not yet been to the mine; he could not, 'by reason of the murmurings, discords, and vexations;' but he will go at once, make trial of the mine,

and come down to Trinidad by the Macareo mouth. He sends a parcel of scattered papers, a roll of tobacco, a tortoise, some oranges and lemons. 'Praying God to give you health and strength of body, and a mind armed against all extremities, I rest ever to be commanded, your lordship's, Keymish.'

'Oh Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!' But weeping is in vain. The noble lad sleeps there under the palm trees, beside the mighty tropic stream, while the fair Basset, 'his bride in the sight of God,' recks not of him as she wanders in the woods of Umberleigh, wife to the son of Raleigh's deadliest foe. Raleigh, Raleigh, surely God's blessing is not on this voyage of thine. Surely He hath set thy misdeeds before Him, and thy secret sins in the light of His countenance.

Another blank of misery: but his honour is still safe. Keymis will return with that gold ore, that pledge of his good faith for which he has ventured all. Surely God will let that come after all, now that he has paid as its price his first-born's blood?

At last Keymis returns with thinned numbers. All are weary, spirit-broken, discontented, mutinous. Where is the gold ore?

There is none. Keymis has never been to the mine after all. His companions curse him as a traitor who has helped Raleigh to deceive them into ruin; the mine is imaginary—a lie. The crews are ready to break into open mutiny; after a while they will do so.

Yes. God is setting this man's secret sins in the light

of His countenance. If he has been ambitious, his ambition has punished itself now. If he has cared more for his own honour than for his wife and children, that sin too has punished itself. If he has (which I affirm not) tampered with truth for the sake of what seemed to him noble and just ends, that too has punished itself; for his men do not trust him. If he has (which I affirm not) done any wrong in that matter of Cobham, that too has punished itself; for his men, counting him as 'non ens' in law, will not respect or obey him. If he has spoken after his old fashion, rash and exaggerated words, and goes on speaking them, even though it be through the pressure of despair, that too shall punish itself; and for every idle word that he shall say, God will bring him into judgment. And why, but because he is noble? Why, but because he is nearer to God by a whole heaven than others whom God lets fatten on their own sins, having no understanding, because they are in honour, and having children at their hearts' desire, and leaving the rest of their substance to their babes? Not so does God deal with His elect, when they will try to worship at once self and Him; He requires truth in the inward parts, and will purge them till they are true, and single-eyed, and full of light.

Keymis returns with the wreck of his party. The scene between him and Raleigh may be guessed. Keymis has excuse on excuse. He could not get obeyed after young Raleigh's death: he expected to find that Sir Walter was either dead of his sickness, or

of grief for his son, and had no wish 'to enrich a company of rascals who made no account of him.' He dare not go up to the mine because (and here Raleigh thinks his excuse fair) the fugitive Spaniards lay in the craggy woods through which he would have to pass, and that he had not men enough even to hold the town securely. If he reached the mine, and left a company there, he had no provisions for them; and he dared not send backward and forward to the town, while the Spaniards were in the woods. The warnings sent by Gondomar had undone all, and James's treachery had done its work. So Keymis, 'thinking it a greater error, so he said, to discover the mine to the Spaniards, than to excuse himself to the Company, said that he could not find it.' From all which, one thing at least is evident, that Keymis believed in the existence of the mine.

Raleigh 'rejects these fancies;' tells him before divers gentlemen, that 'a blind man might find it, by the marks which Keymis himself had set down under his hand:' that 'his case of losing so many men in the woods' was a mere pretence: after Walter was slain, he knew that Keymis had no care of any man's surviving. 'You have undone me, wounded my credit with the King, past recovery. As you have followed your own advice, and not mine, you must satisfy his Majesty. I shall be glad if you can do it: but I cannot.' There is no use dwelling on such vain regrets and reproaches. Raleigh perhaps is bitter, unjust. As he himself writes twice, to his wife and Sir Ralph Winwood, his 'brains are broken.' He writes to them

both, and re-opens the letters to add long postscripts, at his wits' end. Keymis goes off; spends a few miserable days; and then enters Raleigh's cabin. He has written his apology to Lord Arundel, and begs Raleigh to allow of it. 'No. You have undone me by your obstinacy. I will not favour or colour your former folly.' 'Is that your resolution, sir?' 'It is.' 'I know not then, sir, what course to take.' And so he goes out, and into his own cabin overhead. A minute after, a pistol-shot is heard. Raleigh sends up a boy to know the reason. Keymis answers from within, that he has fired it off because it had been long charged; and all is quiet.

Half an hour after the boy goes into the cabin. Keymis is lying on his bed, the pistol by him. The boy moves him. The pistol-shot has broken a rib, and gone no further; but as the corpse is turned over, a long knife is buried in that desperate heart. Another of the old heroes is gone to his wild account.

Gradually drops of explanation ooze out. The 'Sergeant-major, Raleigh's nephew, and others, confess that Keymis told them that he could have brought them in two hours to the mine: but as the young heir was slain, and his father was unpardoned, and not like to live, he had no reason to open the mine, either for the Spaniard *or the King.*' Those latter words are significant. What cared the old Elizabethan seaman for the weal of such a king? And, indeed, what good to such a king would all the mines in Guiana be? They answered that the King, nevertheless, had 'granted

Raleigh his heart's desire under the great seal.' He replied that 'the grant to Raleigh was to a man 'non ens' in law, and, therefore, of no force.' Here, too, James's policy has worked well. How could men dare or persevere under such a cloud?

How, indeed, could they have found heart to sail at all? The only answer is, that they knew Raleigh well enough to have utter faith in him, and that Keymis himself knew of the mine.

Puppies at home in England gave out that he had killed himself from remorse at having deceived so many gentlemen with an imaginary phantom. Everyone, of course, according to his measure of charity, has power and liberty to assume any motive which he will. Mine is simply the one which shows upon the face of the documents; that the old follower, devoted alike to the dead son and to the doomed father, feeling that he had, he scarce knew how, failed in the hour of need, frittered away the last chance of a mighty enterprise, which had been his fixed idea for years, and ruined the man whom he adored, avenged upon himself the fault of having disobeyed orders, given peremptorily, and to be peremptorily executed.

Here, perhaps, my tale should end; for all beyond is but the waking of the corpse. The last death-struggle of the Elizabethan heroism is over, and all its remains vanish slowly, in an undignified sickening way. All epics end so. After the war of Troy, Achilles must die by coward Paris' arrow, in some mysterious, confused, pitiful fashion; and stately Hecuba must rail herself

into a very dog, and bark for ever shamefully around lonely Cynossema. Young David ends as a dotard—Solomon as worse. Glorious Alexander must die, half of fever, half of drunkenness, as the fool dieth. Charles the Fifth, having thrown all away but his follies, ends in a convent, a superstitious imbecile; Napoleon squabbles to the last with Sir Hudson Lowe about champagne. It must be so; and the glory must be God's alone. For in great men, and great times, there is nothing good or vital, but what is of God, and not of man's self; and when He taketh away that divine breath they die, and return again to their dust. But the earth does not lose; for when He sendeth forth His Spirit they live, and renew the face of the earth. A new generation arises, with clearer sight, with fuller experience, sometimes with nobler aims; and

> The old order changeth, giveth place to the new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways.

The Elizabethan epic did not end a day too soon. There was no more life left in it; and God had something better in store for England. Raleigh's ideal was a noble one: but God's was nobler far. Raleigh would have made her a gold kingdom, like Spain, and destroyed her very vitals by that gold, as Spain was destroyed. And all the while the great and good God was looking steadfastly upon that little struggling Virginian village, Raleigh's first-born, forgotten in his new mighty dreams, and saying, 'Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.' There, and not in Guinaa;

upon the simple tillers of the soil, not among wild reckless gold-hunters, would His blessing rest. The very coming darkness would bring brighter light. The evil age itself would be the parent of new good, and drive across the seas steadfast Pilgrim Fathers, and generous Royalist Cavaliers, to be the parents of a mightier nation than has ever yet possessed the earth. Verily, God's ways are wonderful, and his counsels in the great deep.

So ends the Elizabethan epic. Must we follow the corpse to the grave? It is necessary.

And now, 'you gentlemen of England, who sit at home at ease,' what would you have done in like case? —Your last die thrown; your last stake lost; your honour, as you fancy, stained for ever; your eldest son dead in battle—What would you have done? What Walter Raleigh did was this. He kept his promise. He had promised Lord Arundel to return to England; and return he did.

But it is said, his real intention, as he himself confessed, was to turn pirate, and take the Mexico fleet.

That wild thoughts of such a deed may have crossed his mind, may have been a terrible temptation to him, may even have broken out in hasty words, one does not deny. He himself says that he spoke of such a thing, 'to keep his men together.' All depends on how the words were spoken. The form of the sentence, the tone of voice, is everything. Who could blame him, if, seeing some of the captains whom he had most

trusted deserting him, his men heaping him with every slander, and, as he solemnly swore on the scaffold, calling witnesses thereto by name, forcing him to take an oath that he would not return to England before they would have him, and locking him into his own cabin—who could blame him, I ask, for saying in that daring off-hand way of his, which has so often before got him into trouble, 'Come, my lads, do not despair. If the worst comes to the worst, there is the Plate-fleet to fall back upon?' When I remember, too, that the taking of the said Plate-fleet was, in Raleigh's eyes, an altogether just thing, and that he knew perfectly, that if he succeeded therein he would be backed by the public opinion of all England, and probably buy his pardon of James, who, if he loved Spain well, loved money better; my surprise rather is, that he did not go and do it. As for any meeting of captains in his cabin, and serious proposal of such a plan, I believe it to be simply one of the innumerable lies which James inserted in his Declaration, gathered from the tales of men, who fearing (and reasonably) lest their heads should follow Raleigh's, tried to curry favour by slandering him. This 'Declaration' has been so often exposed, that I may safely pass it by; and pass by almost as safely the argument which some have drawn from a chance expression of his in his pathetic letter to Lady Raleigh, in which he 'hopes that God would send him somewhat before his return.' To prove an intention of piracy in the despairing words of a ruined man writing to comfort a ruined wife for the loss of

her first-born, is surely to deal out hard measure. Heaven have mercy upon us, if all the hasty words which woe has wrung from our hearts are to be so judged either by man or God!

Sir Julius Cæsar, again, one of the commission appointed to examine him, informs us, that on being confronted with Captains St. Leger and Pennington, he confessed that he proposed the taking of the Mexico fleet, if the mine failed. To which I can only answer, that all depends on how the thing was said, and that this is the last fact which we should find in Sir Julius's notes, which are, it is confessed, so confused, obscure, and full of gaps, as to be often hardly intelligible. The same remark applies to Wilson's story, which I agree with Mr. Tytler in thinking worthless. Wilson, it must be understood, is employed, after Raleigh's return, as a spy upon him, which office he executes, all confess, (and Wilson himself as much as any,) as falsely, treacherously, and hypocritically as did ever sinful man; and, inter alia, he has this, 'This day he told me what discourse he and the Lord Chancellor had about taking the Plate-fleet, which he confessed he would have taken had he lighted on it.' To which my Lord Chancellor said, 'Why, you would have been a pirate.' 'Oh,' quoth he, 'did you ever know of any that were pirates for millions? They only that wish for small things are pirates.' Now, setting aside the improbability that Raleigh should go out of his way to impeach himself to the man whom he must have known was set there to find matter for his death, all, we say, depends

on how it was said. If the Lord Chancellor ever said to Raleigh, 'To take the Mexico fleet would be piracy,' it would have been just like Raleigh to give such an answer. The speech is a perfectly true one: Raleigh knew the world, no man better; and saw through its hollowness, and the cant and hypocrisy of his generation; and he sardonically states an undeniable fact. He is not expressing his own morality, but that of the world; just as he is doing in that passage of his Apology, about which I must complain of Mr. Napier. 'It was a maxim of his,' says Mr. Napier, 'that good success admits of no examination.' This is not fair. The sentence in the original goes on, 'so the contrary allows of no excuse, however reasonable and just whatsoever.' His argument all through the beginning of the Apology, supported by instance on instance from history, is—I cannot get a just hearing, because I have failed in opening this mine. So it is always. Glory covers the multitude of sins. But a man who has failed is a fair mark for every slanderer, puppy, ignoramus, discontented mutineer; as I am now. What else, in the name of common sense, could have been his argument? Does Mr. Napier really think that Raleigh, even if in the face of all the noble and pious words which he had written he held so immoral a doctrine, would have been shameless and senseless enough to assert his own rascality in an apology addressed to the most 'religious' of kings in the most canting of generations?

But still more astonished am I at the use which

has been made of Captain Parker's letter. The letter is written by a man in a state of frantic rage and disappointment. There never was any mine, he believes now. Keymis's 'delays we found mere delusions; for he was false to all men and hateful to himself, loathing to live since he could do no more villany. I will speak no more of this hateful fellow to God and man.' And it is on the testimony of a man in this temper that we are asked to believe that 'the admiral and vice-admiral,' Raleigh and St. Leger, are going to the Western Islands 'to look for homeward-bound men:' if, indeed, the looking for homeward-bound men means really looking for the Spanish fleet, and not merely for recruits for their crews. I never recollect —and I have read pretty fully the sea-records of those days—such a synonym used either for the Mexican or Indian fleet. But let this be as it may, the letter proves too much. For, first, it proves, that whosoever is not going to turn 'pirate,' our calm and charitable friend Captain Parker is; 'for my part, by the permission of God, I will either *make a voyage*, or bury myself in the sea.' Now, what making a voyage meant there is no doubt; and the sum total of the letter is, that a man intending to turn rover himself accuses, under the influence of violent passion, his comrades of doing the like. We may believe him about himself: about others, we shall wait for testimony a little less interested.

But the letter proves too much again. For Parker says that 'Witney and Woolaston are gone off a-head

to look for homeward-bound men,' thus agreeing with Raleigh's message to his wife, that 'Witney, for whom I sold all my plate at Plymouth, and to whom I gave more credit and countenance than to all the captains of my fleet, ran from me at the Grenadas, and Woolaston with him.'

And now, reader, how does this of Witney, and Woolaston, and Parker's intentions to 'pirate' separately, if it be true, agree with King James's story of Raleigh's calling a council of war and proposing an attack on the Plate-fleet? One or the other must needs be a lie; probably both. Witney's ship was of only 160 tons; Woolaston's probably smaller. Five such ships would be required, as any reader of Hakluyt must know, to take a single Carack; and it would be no use running the risk of hanging for any less prize. The Spanish main was warned and armed, and the Western Isles also. Is it possible that these two men would have been insane enough in such circumstances to go without Raleigh, if they could have gone with him? And is it possible that he, if he had any set purpose of attacking the Plate-fleet, would not have kept them, in order to attempt that with him which neither they nor he could do without each other; Moreover, no 'piratical' act ever took place; if any had, we should have heard enough about it; and why is Parker to be believed against Raleigh alone, when there is little doubt that he slandered all the rest of the captains? Lastly, it was to this very Parker, with Mr. Tresham, and another gentleman, that Raleigh

appealed by name on the scaffold, as witnesses that it was his crew who tried to keep him from going home, and not he them.

My own belief is, and it is surely simple and rational enough, that Raleigh's 'brains,' as he said, 'were broken;' that he had no distinct plan: but that loth to leave the New World without a second attempt on Guiana, he went up to Newfoundland to re-victual, 'and with good hope,' as he wrote to Winwood himself, 'of keeping the sea till August with some four reasonable good ships,' probably, as Oldys remarks, to try a trading voyage; but found his gentlemen too dispirited and incredulous, his men too mutinous to do anything; and seeing his ships go home one by one, at last followed them himself, because he had promised Arundel and Pembroke so to do; having, after all, as he declared on the scaffold, extreme difficulty in persuading his men to land at all in England. The other lies about him, as of his having intended to desert his soldiers in Guiana, his having taken no tools to work the mine, and so forth, one only notices to say, that the Declaration takes care to make the most of them, without deigning, after its fashion, to adduce any proof but anonymous hearsays. If it be true that Bacon drew up that famous document, it reflects no credit either on his honesty or his 'inductive science.'

So Raleigh returns, anchors in Plymouth. He finds that Captain North has brought home the news of his mishaps, and that there is a proclamation against him, which by the bye lies, for it talks of limitations and

cautions given to Raleigh which do not appear in his commission; and, moreover, that a warrant is out for his apprehension. He sends his men on shore, and starts for London to surrender himself, in company with faithful Captain King, who alone clings to him to the last, and from whom we have details of the next few days. Near Ashburton, he is met by Sir Lewis Stukely, his near kinsman, Vice-Admiral of Devon, who has orders to arrest him. Raleigh tells him that he has saved him the trouble; and the two return to Plymouth, where Stukely, strangely enough, leaves him at liberty, and rides about the country. We should be slow in imputing baseness: but one cannot help suspecting from Stukely's subsequent conduct that he had from the first private orders to give Raleigh a chance of trying to escape, in order to have a handle against him, such as his own deeds had not yet given.

The ruse, if it existed then, as it did afterwards, succeeds. Raleigh hears bad news. Gondomar has —or has not—told his story to the king by crying, 'Piratas! piratas! piratas!' and then rushing out without explanation. James is in terror lest what had happened should break off the darling Spanish match. Raleigh foresees ruin, perhaps death. Life is sweet, and Guiana is yet where it was. He may win a basketful of the ore still, and prov. himself no liar. He will escape to France. Faithful King finds him a Rochelle ship; he takes boat to her, goes half way, and returns. Honour is sweeter than life, and James may yet be just. The next day he bribes the master to wait for him

one more day, starts for the ship once more, and again returns to Plymouth—so King will make oath—of his own free will. The temptation must have been terrible, and the sin none. What kept him from yielding but innocence and honour? He will clear himself; and if not, abide the worst. Stukely and James found out these facts, and made good use of them afterwards. For now comes 'a severe letter from my Lords' to bring Raleigh up as speedily as his health will permit; and with it comes one Mannourie, a French quack, of whom honest King takes little note at the time, but who will make himself remembered.

And now begins a series of scenes most pitiable; Raleigh's brains are indeed broken. He is old, worn-out with the effects of his fever, lame, ruined, broken-hearted, and, for the first time in his life, weak and silly. He takes into his head the paltriest notion that he can gain time to pacify the king by feigning himself sick. He puts implicit faith in the rogue Mannourie, whom he has never seen before. He sends forward Lady Raleigh to London—perhaps ashamed—as who would not have been?—to play the fool in that sweet presence; and with her good Captain King, who is to engage one Cotterell, an old servant of Raleigh's, to find a ship wherein to escape, if the worst comes to the worst. Cotterell sends King to an old boatswain of his, who owns a ketch. She is to lie off Tilbury; and so King waits Raleigh's arrival. What passed in the next four or five days will never be truly known, for our only account comes from two self-convicted villains,

Stukely and Mannourie. On these details I shall not enter. First, because one cannot trust a word of them; secondly, because no one will wish to hear them who feels, as I do, how pitiable and painful is the sight of a great heart and mind utterly broken. Neither shall I spend time on Stukely's villanous treatment of Raleigh, for which he had a commission from James in writing; his pretending to help him to escape, his going down the Thames in a boat with him, his trying in vain to make honest King as great a rogue as himself. Like most rascalities, Stukely's conduct, even as he himself states it, is very obscure. All that we can see is, that Cotterell told Stukely everything: that Stukely bade Cotterell carry on the deceit; that Stukely had orders from head-quarters to incite Raleigh to say or do something which might form a fresh ground of accusal; that, being a clumsy rogue, he failed, and fell back on abetting Raleigh's escape, as a last resource. Be it as it may, he throws off the mask as soon as Raleigh has done enough to prove an intent to escape; arrests him, and conducts him to the Tower.

There two shameful months are spent in trying to find out some excuse for Raleigh's murder. Wilson is set over him as a spy; his letters to his wife are intercepted. Every art is used to extort a confession of a great plot with France, and every art fails utterly—simply, it seems to me, because there was no plot. Raleigh writes an apology, letters of entreaty, self-justification, what not; all, in my opinion, just and true enough; but like his speech on the scaffold, weak,

confused—the product of a "broken brain." However, his head must come off; and as a last resource, it must be taken off upon the sentence of fifteen years ago, and he who was condemned for plotting with Spain, must die for plotting against her. It is a pitiable business: but, as Osborne says, in a passage, (p. 108 of his Memoirs of James,) for which one freely forgives him all his sins and lies, and they are many,—

> As the foolish idolaters were wont to sacrifice the choicest of their children to the devil, so our king gave up his incomparable jewel to the will of this monster of ambition (the Spaniard), under the pretence of a superannuated transgression, contrary to the opinion of the more honest sort of gownsmen, who maintained that his Majesty's pardon lay inclusively in the commission he gave him on his setting out to sea; it being incongruous that he, who remained under the notion of one dead in the law, should as a general dispose of the lives of others, not being himself master of his own.

But no matter. He must die. The Queen intercedes for him, as do all honest men: but in vain. He has twenty-four hours' notice to prepare for death; eats a good breakfast; takes a cup of sack and a pipe; makes a rambling speech, in which one notes only the intense belief that he is an honest man, and the intense desire to make others believe so, in the very smallest matters; and then dies smilingly, as one weary of life. One makes no comment. Raleigh's life really ended on that day that poor Keymis returned from San Thomé.

And then?

As we said, Truth is stranger than fiction. No dramatist dare invent a "poetic justice" more perfect

than fell upon the traitor. It is not always so, no doubt. God reserves many a greater sinner for that most awful of all punishments—impunity. But there are crises in a nation's life in which God makes terrible examples, to put before the most stupid and sensual the choice of Hercules, the upward road of life, the downward one which leads to the pit. Since the time of Pharaoh and the Red Sea host, history is full of such palpable, unmistakable revelations of the Divine Nemesis; and in England, too, at that moment, the crisis was there; and the judgment of God was revealed accordingly. Sir Lewis Stukely remained, it seems, at Court; high in favour with James: but he found, nevertheless, that people looked darkly on him. Like many self-convicted rogues, he must needs thrust his head into his own shame; and one day he goes to good old Lord Charles Howard's house; for being Vice-Admiral of Devon, he has affairs with the old Armada hero. The old lion explodes in an unexpected roar. "Darest thou come into my presence, thou base fellow, who art reputed the common scorn and contempt of all men? Were it not in mine own house, I would cudgel thee with my staff for presuming to speak to me!' Stukely, his tail between his legs, goes off and complains to James. 'What should I do with him? Hang him? On my sawle, mon, if I hung all that spoke ill of thee, all the trees in the island were too few.' Such is the gratitude of kings, thinks Stukely; and retires to write foolish pamphlets in self-justification, which, unfortunately for his memory, still remain to make bad worse.

Within twelve months he, the rich and proud Vice-Admiral of Devon, with a shield of sixteen quarterings, and the blood-royal in his veins, was detected debasing the King's coin within the precincts of the royal palace, together with his old accomplice Mannourie, who, being taken, confessed that his charges against Raleigh were false. He fled, a ruined man, back to his native county, and his noble old seat of Affton; but Até is on the heels of such—

> Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound,
> sudden she grips him,
> Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror to
> mortals.

A terrible plebiscitum had been passed in the West country against the betrayer of its last Worthy. The gentlemen closed their doors against him; the poor refused him—so goes the legend—fire and water. Driven by the Furies, he fled from Affton, and wandered westward down the vale of Taw, away to Appledore, and there took boat, and out into the boundless Atlantic, over the bar, now crowded with shipping, for which Raleigh's genius had discovered a new trade and a new world.

Sixteen miles to the westward, like a blue cloud on the horizon, rises the ultima Thule of Devon, the little isle of Lundy. There one outlying peak of granite, carrying up a shelf of slate upon its southern flank, has defied the waves, and formed an island some three miles long, desolate, flat-headed, fretted by every frost and storm, walled all round with four hundred feet

of granite cliff, sacred only, then at least, to puffins and pirates. Over the single landing-place frowns from the cliff the keep of an old ruin, 'Moresco Castle,' as they call it still, where some bold rover, Sir John de Moresco, in the times of the old Edwards, worked his works of darkness: a grey, weird, uncanny pile of moorstone, through which all the winds of heaven howl day and night.

In a chamber of that ruin died Sir Lewis Stukely, Lord of Affton, cursing God and man.

These things are true. Said I not well that reality is stranger than romance?

But no Nemesis followed James.

The answer will depend much upon what readers consider to be a Nemesis. If to have found England one of the greatest countries in Europe, and to have left it one of the most inconsiderable and despicable; if to be fooled by flatterers to the top of his bent, until he fancied himself all but a god, while he was not even a man, and could neither speak the truth, keep himself sober, or look on a drawn sword without shrinking; if, lastly, to have left behind him a son who, in spite of many chivalrous instincts unknown to his father, had been so indoctrinated in that father's vices as to find it impossible to speak the truth even when it served his purpose; if all these things be no Nemesis, then none fell on James Stuart.

But of that son, at least, the innocent blood was required. He, too, had his share in the sin. In Carew Raleigh's simple and manful petition to the Commons

of England for the restoration of his inheritance, we find a significant fact, stated without one word of comment, bitter or otherwise. At Prince Henry's death, the Sherborne lands had been given again to Carr, Lord Somerset. To him, too, 'the whirligig of time brought round its revenges,' and he lost them when arraigned and condemned for poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury. Then Sir John Digby, afterwards Earl of Bristol, begged Sherborne of the King, and had it. Pembroke (Shakespeare's Pembroke) brought young Carew to Court, hoping to move the tyrant's heart. James saw him and shuddered; perhaps conscience-stricken, perhaps of mere cowardice. 'He looked like the ghost of his father,' as he well might, to that guilty soul. Good Pembroke advised his young kinsman to travel, which he did till James's death in the next year. Then coming over—this is his own story—he asked of Parliament to be restored in blood, that he might inherit aught that might fall to him in England. His petition was read twice in the Lords. Whereon 'King Charles sent Sir James Fullarton, then of the bed-chamber, to Mr. Raleigh, to command him to come to him; and being brought in, the King, after using him with great civility, notwithstanding told him plainly, that when he was prince, he had promised the Earl of Bristol to secure his title to Sherborne against the heirs of Sir Walter Raleigh; whereon the earl had given him, then prince, ten thousand pounds; that now he was bound to make good his promise, being king; that, therefore, unless he would quit his right and title to

Sherborne, he neither could or would pass his bill of restoration.'

Young Raleigh, like a good Englishman, 'urged,' he says, 'the justness of his cause; that he desired only the liberty of the subject, and to be left to the law, which was never denied any freeman.' The king remained obstinate. His noble brother's love for the mighty dead weighed nothing with him, much less justice. Poor young Raleigh was forced to submit. The act for his restoration was passed, reserving Sherborne for Lord Bristol, and Charles patched up the affair, by allowing to Lady Raleigh and her son after her, a life pension of four hundred a year.

Young Carew tells his story simply, and without a note of bitterness; though he professes his intent to range himself and his two sons for the future 'under the banner of the Commons of England,' he may be a royalist for any word beside. Even where he mentions the awful curse of his mother, he only alludes to its fulfilment by—'that which hath happened since to that royal family, is too sad and disastrous for me to repeat, and yet too visible not to be discerned.' We can have no doubt that he tells the exact truth. Indeed the whole story fits Charles's character to the smallest details. The want of any real sense of justice, combined with the false notion of honour; the implacable obstinacy; the contempt for that law by which alone he held his crown; the combination of unkingliness in commanding a private interview, and shamelessness in confessing his own meanness—all these are true notes of

the man whose deliberate suicide stands written, a warning to all bad rulers till the end of time. But he must have been a rogue early in life, and a needy rogue too. That ten thousand pounds of Lord Bristol's money should make many a sentimentalist reconsider—if, indeed, sentimentalists can be made to reconsider, or even to consider, anything—their notion of him as the incarnation of pious chivalry.

At least the ten thousand pounds cost Charles dear. The widow's curse followed him home. Naseby fight and the Whitehall scaffold were surely God's judgment of such deeds, whatever man's may be.

III.

FROUDE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

III.

FROUDE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.*

THERE appeared, a few years since, a 'Comic History of England,' duly caricaturing and falsifying all our great national events, and representing the English people, for many centuries back, as a mob of fools and knaves, led by the nose in each generation by a few arch-fools and arch-knaves. Some thoughtful persons regarded the book with utter contempt and indignation; it seemed to them a crime to have written it; a proof of 'banausia,' as Aristotle would have called it, only to be outdone by the writing a 'Comic Bible.' After a while, however, their indignation began to subside; their second thoughts, as usual, were more charitable than their first; they were not surprised to hear that the author was an honest, just, and able magistrate; they saw that the publication of such a book involved no moral turpitude; that it was merely meant as a jest on a subject on which jesting was permissible, and as a

* North British Review, No. LI., November 1856.—"A History of England, from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth." By J. A. Froude, M.A., late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. London: J. W. Parker and Son, West Strand. 2 vols. 1856.

money speculation in a field of which men had a right to make money; while all which seemed offensive in it was merely the outcome, and as *it* were apotheosis, of that method of writing English history which has been popular for nearly a hundred years. 'Which of our modern historians,' they asked themselves, 'has had any real feeling of the importance, the sacredness, of his subject?—any real trust in, or respect for, the characters with whom he dealt? Has not the belief of each and all of them been the same—that on the whole, the many always have been fools and knaves; foolish and knavish enough, at least, to become the puppets of a few fools and knaves who held the reins of power? Have they not held that, on the whole, the problems of human nature, and human history, have been sufficiently solved by Gibbon and Voltaire, Gil Blas, and Figaro; that our forefathers were silly barbarians; that this glorious nineteenth century is the one region of light, and that all before was outer darkness, peopled by 'foreign devils,' Englishmen, no doubt, according to the flesh, but in spirit, in knowledge, in creed, in customs, so utterly different from ourselves, that we shall merely show our sentimentalism by doing aught but laughing at them?

On what other principle have our English histories as yet been constructed, even down to the children's books, which taught us in childhood that the history of this country was nothing but a string of foolish wars, carried on by wicked kings, for reasons hitherto unexplained, save on that great historic law of Goldsmith's

by which Sir Archibald Alison would still explain the French Revolution,—

> The dog, to serve his private ends,
> Went mad, and bit the man!

It will be answered by some, and perhaps rather angrily, that these strictures are too sweeping; that there is arising, in a certain quarter, a school of history books for young people of a far more reverent tone, which tries to do full honour to the Church, and her work in the world. Those books of this school which we have seen, we must reply, seem just as much wanting in real reverence for the past, as the school of Gibbon and Voltaire. It is not the past which they reverence, but a few characters or facts eclectically picked out of the past, and, for the most part, made to look beautiful by ignoring all the features which will not suit their preconceived pseudo-ideal. There is in these books a scarcely concealed dissatisfaction with the whole course of the British mind since the Reformation, and (though they are not inclined to confess the fact) with its whole course before the Reformation, because that course was one of steady struggle against the Papacy and its anti-national pretensions. They are the outcome of an utterly un-English tone of thought; and the so-called 'ages of faith' are pleasant and useful to them, principally because they are distant and unknown enough to enable them to conceal from their readers that in the ages on which they look back as ideally perfect, a Bernard and a Francis of Assisi were

crying all day long—'O that my head were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the sins of my people!' Dante was cursing popes and prelates in the name of the God of Righteousness; Boccaccio and Chaucer were lifting the veil from priestly abominations of which we now are ashamed even to read; and Wolsey, seeing the rottenness of the whole system, spent his mighty talents, and at last poured out his soul unto death, in one long useless effort to make the crooked straight, and number that which had been weighed in the balances of God, and found for ever wanting. To ignore wilfully facts like these, which were patent all along to the British nation, facts on which the British laity acted, till they finally conquered at the Reformation, and on which they are acting still, and will, probably, act for ever, is not to have any real reverence for the opinions or virtues of our forefathers; and we are not astonished to find repeated, in such books, the old stock calumnies against our lay and Protestant worthies, taken at second-hand from the pages of Lingard. In copying from Lingard, however, this party has done no more than those writers have who would repudiate any party—almost any Christian—purpose. Lingard is known to have been a learned man, and to have examined many manuscripts which few else had taken the trouble to look at; so his word is to be taken, no one thinking it worth while to ask whether he has either honestly read, or honestly quoted, the documents. It suited the sentimental and lazy liberality of the last generation to make a show of fairness, by letting the

Popish historian tell his side of the story, and to sneer at the illiberal old notion, that gentlemen of his class were given to be rather careless about historic truth when they had a purpose to serve thereby; and Lingard is now actually recommended, as a standard authority for the young, by educated Protestants, who seem utterly unable to see that, whether the man be honest or not, his whole view of the course of British events, since Becket first quarrelled with his king, must be antipodal to their own; and that his account of all which has passed for three hundred years since the fall of Wolsey is most likely to be (and, indeed, may be proved to be) one huge libel on the whole nation, and the destiny which God has marked out for it.

There is, indeed, no intrinsic cause why the ecclesiastical, or pseudo-Catholic, view of history should, in any wise, conduce to a just appreciation of our forefathers. For not only did our forefathers rebel against that conception again and again, till they finally trampled it under their feet, and so appear, prima facie, as offenders to be judged at its bar; but the conception itself is one which takes the very same view of nature as that cynic conception of which we spoke above. Man, with the Romish divines, is, ipso facto, the same being as the man of Voltaire, Le Sage, or Beaumarchais; he is an insane and degraded being, who is to be kept in order, and, as far as may be, cured and set to work by an ecclesiastical system; and the only threads of light in the dark web of his history are clerical and theurgic, not lay and human. Voltaire is

the very experimentum crucis of this ugly fact. European history looks to him what it would have looked to his Jesuit preceptors, had the sacerdotal element in it been wanting; what heathen history actually did look to them. He eliminates the sacerdotal element, and nothing remains but the chaos of apes and wolves, which the Jesuits had taught him to believe was the original substratum of society. The humanity of his history—even of his 'Pucelle d'Orléans'—is simply the humanity of Sanchez, and the rest of those vingt-quatre Pères, who hang gibbeted for ever in the pages of Pascal. He is superior to his teachers, certainly, in this, that he has hope for humanity on earth; dreams of a new and nobler life for society, by means of a true and scientific knowledge of the laws of the moral and material universe; in a word, he has, in the midst of all his filth and his atheism, a faith in a righteous and truth-revealing God, which the priests who brought him up had not. Let the truth be spoken, even though in favour of such a destroying Azrael as Voltaire. And what if his primary conception of humanity be utterly base? Is that of our modern historians so much higher? Do Christian men seem to them, on the whole, in all ages, to have had the Spirit of God with them, leading them into truth, however imperfectly and confusedly they may have learnt his lessons? Have they ever heard with their ears, or listened when their fathers have declared unto them, the noble works which God did in their days, and in the old time before them? Do they believe that the path of Chris-

tendom has been, on the whole, the path of life, and the right way, and that the living God is leading her therein? Are they proud of the old British worthies? Are they jealous and tender of the reputation of their ancestors? Do they believe that there were any worthies at all in England before the steam-engine and political economy were discovered? Do their conceptions of past society, and the past generations, retain anything of that great thought which is common to all the Aryan races—that is, to all races who have left aught behind them better than mere mounds of earth—to Hindoo and Persian, Greek and Roman, Teuton and Scandinavian, that men are the sons of the heroes, who were the sons of God? Or do they believe, that for civilized people of the nineteenth century, it is as well to say as little as possible about ancestors who possessed our vices without our amenities, our ignorance without our science; who were bred, no matter how, like flies by summer heat, out of that everlasting midden which men call the world, to buzz and sting their foolish day, and leave behind them a fresh race which knows them not, and could win no honour by owning them, and which owes them no more than if it had been produced, as midden-flies were said to be of old, by some spontaneous generation?

It is not probable that this writer will be likely to undervalue political economy, or the steam-engine, or any other solid and practical good, which God has unveiled to this generation. All that he does demand (for he has a right to demand it) is, that rational

men should believe that our forefathers were at least as good as we are; that whatsoever their measure of light was, they acted up to what they knew, as faithfully as we do; and that, on the whole, it was not their fault if they did not know more. Even now, the real discoveries of the age are made, as of old, by a very few men; and, when made, have to struggle, as of old, against all manner of superstitions, lazinesses, scepticisms. Is the history of the Minié rifle one so very complimentary to our age's quickness of perception, that we can afford to throw many stones at the prejudices of our ancestors? The truth is that, as of old, 'many men talk of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow;' and many talk of Bacon, who never discovered a law by induction since they were born. As far as our experience goes, those who are loudest in their jubilations over the wonderful progress of the age, are those who have never helped that progress forward one inch, but find it a great deal easier and more profitable to use the results which humbler men have painfully worked out, as second-hand capital for hustings-speeches and railway books, and flatter a mechanics' institute of self-satisfied youths, by telling them that the least instructed of them is wiser than Erigena or Roger Bacon. Let them be. They have their reward. And so also has the patient and humble man of science, who, the more he knows, confesses the more how little he knows, and looks back with affectionate reverence on the great men of old time—on Archimedes and Ptolemy, Aristotle and Pliny, and many another

honourable man who, walking in great darkness, sought a ray of light, and did not seek in vain,—as integral parts of that golden chain of which he is but one link more; as scientific forefathers, without whose aid his science could not have had a being.

Meanwhile, this general tone of irreverence for our forefathers is no hopeful sign. It is unwise to 'inquire why the former times were better than these;' to hang lazily and weakly over some eclectic dream of a past golden age; for to do so is to deny that God is working in this age, as well as in past ages; that His light is as near us now as it was to the worthies of old time. But it is more than unwise to boast and rejoice that the former times were worse than these; and to teach young people to say in their hearts, 'What clever fellows we are, compared to our stupid old fogies of fathers!' More than unwise; for possibly it may be false in fact. To look at the political and moral state of Europe at this moment, Christendom can hardly afford to look down on any preceding century, and seems to be in want of something which neither science nor constitutional government seems able to supply. Whether our forefathers also lacked that something, we will not inquire just now; but if they did, their want of scientific and political knowledge was evidently not the cause of the defect; or why is not Spain now infinitely better, instead of being infinitely worse off, than she was three hundred years ago?

At home, too——But on the question whether we

are so very much better off than our forefathers, Mr. Froude, not we, must speak: for he has deliberately, in his new history, set himself to the solution of this question, and we will not anticipate what he has to say; what we would rather insist on now are the moral effects produced on our young people by books which teach them to look with contempt on all generations but their own, and with suspicion on all public characters save a few contemporaries of their own especial party.

There is an ancient Hebrew book, which contains a singular story concerning a grandson who was cursed because his father laughed at the frailty of the grandfather. Whether the reader shall regard that story (as we do) as a literal fact recorded by inspired wisdom, as an instance of one of the great root-laws of family life, and therefore of that national life which (as the Hebrew book so cunningly shows) is the organic development of the family life; or whether he shall treat it (as we do not) as a mere apologue or myth, he must confess that it is equally grand in its simplicity, and singular in its unexpected result. The words of the story, taken literally and simply, no more justify the notion that Canaan's slavery was any magical consequence of the old patriarch's anger, than they do the well-known theory, that it was the cause of the negro's blackness. Ham shows a low, foul, irreverent, unnatural temper towards his father. The old man's shame is not a cause of shame to his son, but only of laughter. Noah prophesies (in the fullest and deepest

meaning of that word) that a curse will come upon that son's son; that he will be a slave of slaves; and reason and experience show that he spoke truth. Let the young but see that their fathers have no reverence for the generation before them, then will they in turn have no reverence for their fathers. Let them be taught that the sins of their ancestors involve their own honour so little, that they need not take any trouble to clear the blot off the scutcheon, but may safely sit down and laugh over it, saying, 'Very likely it is true. If so, it is very amusing; and if not—what matter?'—Then those young people are being bred up in a habit of mind which contains in itself all the capabilities of degradation and slavery, in self-conceit, hasty assertion, disbelief in nobleness, and all the other 'credulities of scepticism:' parted from that past from which they take their common origin, they are parted also from each other, and become selfish, self-seeking, divided, and therefore weak: disbelieving in the nobleness of those who have gone before them, they learn more and more to disbelieve in the nobleness of those around them; and by denying God's works of old, come, by a just and dreadful Nemesis, to be unable to see his works in the men of their own day; to suspect and impugn valour, righteousness, disinterestedness in their contemporaries; to attribute low motives; to pride themselves on looking at men and things as 'men who know the world,' so the young puppies style it; to be less and less chivalrous to women, less and less respectful to old men, less and less ashamed of

boasting about their sensual appetites; in a word, to show all those symptoms which, when fully developed, leave a generation without fixed principles, without strong faith, without self-restraint, without moral cohesion, the sensual and divided prey of any race, however inferior in scientific knowledge, which has a clear and fixed notion of its work and destiny. That many of these signs are showing themselves more and more ominously in our young men, from the fine gentleman who rides in Rotten Row to the boy-mechanic who listens enraptured to Mr. Holyoake's exposures of the absurdity of all human things save Mr. Holyoake's self, is a fact which presses itself most on those who have watched this age most carefully, and who (rightly or wrongly) attribute much of this miserable temper to the way in which history has been written among us for the last hundred years.

Whether or not Mr. Froude would agree with these notions, he is more or less responsible for them; for they have been suggested by his 'History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth.' It was impossible to read the book, without feeling the contrast between its tone and that of every other account of the times which one had ever seen. Mr. Froude seems to have set to work upon the principle, too much ignored in judging of the past, that the historian's success must depend on his dramatic faculty; and not merely on that constructive element of the faculty in which Mr. Macaulay shows such astonishing power, but on that higher and deeper critical element which

ought to precede the constructive process, and without which the constructive element will merely enable a writer, as was once bitterly but truly said, 'to produce the greatest possible misrepresentation with the least possible distortion of fact.' That deeper dramatic faculty, the critical, is not logical merely, but moral, and depends on the moral health, the wideness and heartiness of his moral sympathies, by which he can put himself—as Mr. Froude has attempted to do, and as we think successfully—into the place of each and every character, and not merely feel for them, but feel with them. He does not merely describe their actions from the outside, attributing them arbitrarily to motives which are pretty sure to be the lowest possible, because it is easier to conceive a low motive than a lofty one, and to call a man a villain, than to unravel patiently the tangled web of good and evil of which his thoughts are composed. He has attempted to conceive of his characters, as he would if they had been his own contemporaries and equals, acting, speaking in his company; and he has, therefore, thought himself bound to act toward them by those rules of charity and courtesy, common alike to Christian morals, English law, and decent society; namely, to hold every man innocent till he is proved guilty; where a doubt exists, to give the prisoner at the bar the benefit of it; not to excite the minds of the public against him by those insinuative or vituperative epithets, which are but adders and scorpions; and on the whole, to believe that a man's death and burial is not the least reason for

ceasing to behave to him like a gentleman and a Christian. We are not inclined to play with solemn things, or to copy Lucian and Quevedo in writing dialogues of the dead: but what dialogues might some bold pen dash off, between the old sons of Anak, at whose coming Hades has long ago been moved, and to receive whom all the kings of the nations have risen up, and the little scribblers who have fancied themselves able to fathom and describe characters to whom they were but pigmies! Conceive a half-hour's interview between Queen Elizabeth and some popular lady-scribbler, who has been deluding herself into the fancy that gossiping inventories of millinery are history. . . . 'You pretend to judge me, whose labours, whose cares, whose fiery trials were, beside yours, as the heaving volcano beside a boy's firework? You condemn my weaknesses? Know that they were stronger than your strength! You impute motives for my sins? Know that till you are as great as I have been, for evil and for good, you will be as little able to comprehend my sins as my righteousness! Poor marsh-croaker, who wishest not merely to swell up to the bulk of the ox, but to embrace it in thy little paws, know thine own size, and leave me to be judged by Him who made me!' . . . How the poor soul would shrink back into nothing before that lion eye which saw and guided the destinies of the world, and all the flunkey-nature (if such a vice exist beyond the grave) come out in utter abjectness, as if the ass in the fable on making his kick at the dead lion, had discovered to his horror that the lion was alive and well——Spirit of

Quevedo! Finish for us the picture which we cannot finish for ourselves.

In a very different spirit from such has Mr. Froude approached these times. Great and good deeds were done in them; and it has therefore seemed probable to him that there were great and good men there to do them. Thoroughly awake to the fact that the Reformation was the new birth of the British nation, it has seemed to him a puzzling theory, which attributes its success to the lust of a tyrant, and the cupidity of his courtiers. It has evidently seemed to him paradoxical that a king who was reputed to have been a satyr, instead of keeping as many concubines as seemed good to him, should have chosen to gratify his passions by entering six times into the strict bonds of matrimony, religiously observing those bonds. It has seemed to him even more paradoxical, that one reputed to have been the most sanguinary tyrant who ever disgraced the English throne, should have been not only endured, but loved and regretted by a fierce and free-spoken people; and he, we suppose, could comprehend as little as we can the reasoning of such a passage as the following, especially when it proceeds from the pen of so wise and venerable a writer as Mr. Hallam.

'A government administered with so frequent violations, not only of the chartered privileges of Englishmen, but of those still more sacred rights which natural law has established, must have been regarded, one would imagine, with just abhorrence, and earnest longings for a change. Yet contemporary authorities by no means

answer this expectation. Some mention Henry after his death in language of eulogy;' (not only Elizabeth, be it remembered, but Cromwell also, always spoke of him with deepest respect; and their language always found an echo in the English heart;) 'and if we except those whom attachment to the ancient religion had inspired with hatred to his memory, few seem to have been aware that his name would descend to posterity among those of the many tyrants and oppressors of innocence, whom the wrath of Heaven has raised up, and the servility of man endured.'

The names of even those few we should be glad to have; for it seems to us, that, with the exception of a few ultra-Protestants, who could not forgive that persecution of the Reformers, which he certainly permitted, if not encouraged, during one period of his reign, no one adopted the modern view of his character till more than a hundred years after his death, when belief in all nobleness and faith had died out among an ignoble and faithless generation, and the scandalous gossip of such a light rogue as Osborne was taken into the place of honest and respectful history.

To clear up such seeming paradoxes as these, by carefully examining the facts of the sixteenth century, has been Mr. Froude's work; and we have the results of his labour in two volumes, embracing only a period of eleven years; but giving promise that the mysteries of the succeeding time will be well cleared up for us in future volumes, and that we shall find our forefathers to have been, if no better, at least no worse men, than

ourselves. He has brought to the task known talents and learning, a mastery over English prose almost unequalled in this generation, a spirit of most patient and good-tempered research, and that intimate knowledge of human motives and passions which his former books have shown, and which we have a right to expect from any scholar who has really profited by Aristotle's unrivalled Ethics. He has fairly examined every contemporary document within his reach, and, as he informs us in the preface, he has been enabled, through the kindness of Sir Francis Palgrave, to consult a great number of MSS. relating to the Reformation, hitherto all but unknown to the public, and referred to in his work as MSS. in the Rolls' House, where the originals are easily accessible. These, he states, he intends to publish, with additions from his own reading, as soon as he has brought his history down to the end of Henry the Eighth's reign.

But Mr. Froude's chief text-book seems to have been State Papers and Acts of Parliament. He has begun his work in the only temper in which a man can write accurately and well; in a temper of trust toward the generation whom he describes. The only temper; for if a man has no affection for the characters of whom he reads, he will never understand them; if he has no respect for his subject, he will never take the trouble to exhaust it. To such an author the Statutes at large, as the deliberate expression of the nation's will and conscience, will appear the most important of all sources of information; the first to be consulted, the last to be

contradicted; the Canon, which is not to be checked and corrected by private letters and flying pamphlets, but which is to check and correct them. This seems Mr. Froude's theory; and we are at no pains to confess, that if he be wrong, we see no hope of arriving at truth. If these public documents are not to be admitted in evidence before all others, we see no hope for the faithful and earnest historian; he must give himself up to swim as he may on the frothy stream of private letters, anecdotes, and pamphlets, the puppet of the ignorance, credulity, peevishness, spite, of any and every gossip and scribbler.

Beginning his history with the fall of Wolsey, Mr. Froude enters, of course, at his first step, into the vexed question of Henry's divorce: an introductory chapter, on the general state of England, we shall notice hereafter.

A very short inspection of the method in which he handles the divorce question, gives us at once confidence in his temper and judgment, and hope that we may at last come to some clearer understanding of it than the old law gives us, which we have already quoted, concerning the dog who went mad to serve his private ends. In a few masterly pages he sketches for us the rotting and dying Church, which had recovered her power after the wars of the Roses over an exhausted nation: but in form only, not in life. Wolsey, with whom he has fair and understanding sympathy, he sketches as the transition minister, 'loving England well, but loving Rome better,' who intends a reform of

the Church, but who, as the Pope's commissioner for that very purpose, is liable to a præmunire, and therefore dare not appeal to Parliament to carry out his designs, even if he could have counted on the Parliament's assistance in any measures designed to invigorate the Church. At last arises in the divorce question the accident which brings to an issue on its most vital point the question of Papal power in England, and which finally draws down ruin upon Wolsey himself.

This appears to have begun in the winter of 1526-7. It was proposed to marry the Princess Mary to a son of the French king. The Bishop of Tarbés, who conducted the negotiations, advised himself, apparently by special instigation of the evil spirit, to raise a question as to her legitimacy.

No more ingenious plan for convulsing England could have been devised. The marriage from which Mary sprang only stood on a reluctant and doubtful dispensation of the Pope's. Henry had entered into it at the entreaty of his ministers, contrary to a solemn promise given to his father, and in spite of the remonstrances of the Archbishop of Canterbury. No blessing seemed to have rested on it. All his children had died young, save this one sickly girl: a sure note of divine displeasure in the eyes of that coarse-minded Church which has always declared the chief, if not the only, purpose of marriage to be the procreation of children.

But more: to question Mary's legitimacy was to throw open the question of succession to half-a-dozen ambitious competitors. It was, too probably, to in-

volve England at Henry's death in another civil war of the Roses, and in all the internecine horrors which were still rankling in the memories of men; and probably, also, to bring down a French or Scotch invasion. There was, then, too good reason, as Mr. Froude shows at length, for Wolsey's assertion to John Cassalis—'If his Holiness, which God forbid, shall show himself unwilling to listen to the King's demands, to me assuredly it will be but grief to live longer, for the innumerable evils which I foresee will follow. . . . Nothing before us but universal and inevitable ruin.' Too good reason there was for the confession of the Pope himself to Gardiner, 'What danger it was to the realm to have this thing hang in suspense. . . . That without an heir-male, &c., the realm was like to come to dissolution.' Too good reason for the bold assertion of the Cardinal-Governor of Bologna, that 'he knew the guise of England as few men did, and that if the King should die without heirs-male, he was sure that it would cost two hundred thousand men's lives; and that to avoid this michief by a second marriage, he thought, would deserve heaven.' Too good reason for the assertion of Hall, that 'all indifferent and discreet persons judged it necessary for the Pope to grant Henry a divorce, and, by enabling him to marry again, give him the hope of an undisputed heir-male.' The Pope had full power to do this; in fact, such cases had been for centuries integral parts of his jurisdiction as head of Christendom. But he was at once too timid and too time-serving to exercise his acknowledged

authority; and thus, just at the very moment when his spiritual power was being tried in the balance, he chose himself to expose his political power to the same test. Both were equally found wanting. He had, it appeared, as little heart to do justice among kings and princes, as he had to seek and to save the souls of men; and the Reformation followed as a matter of course.

Through the tangled brakes of this divorce question Mr. Froude leads us with ease and grace, throwing light, and even beauty, into dark nooks where before all was mist, not merely by his intimate acquaintance with the facts, but still more by his deep knowledge of human character, and of woman's even more than of man's. For the first time, the actors in this long tragedy appear to us as no mere bodiless and soulless names, but as beings of like passions with ourselves, comprehensible, coherent, organic, even in their inconsistencies. Catherine of Arragon is still the Catherine of Shakspeare; but Mr. Froude has given us the key to many parts of her story which Shakspeare left unexplained, and delicately enough has made us understand how Henry's affections, if he ever had any for her—faithfully as he had kept (with one exception) to that loveless mariage de convenance—may have been gradually replaced by indifference and even dislike, long before the divorce was forced on him as a question not only of duty to the nation, but of duty to Heaven. And that he did see it in this latter light, Mr. Froude brings proof from his own words, from which we can escape only by believing that the confessedly honest 'Bluff

King Hal' had suddenly become a consummate liar and a canting hypocrite.

Delicately, too, as if speaking of a lady whom he had met in modern society (as a gentleman is bound to do,) does Mr. Froude touch on the sins of that hapless woman, who played for Henry's crown, and paid for it with her life. With all mercy and courtesy, he gives us proof (for he thinks it his duty to do so) of the French mis-education, the petty cunning, the tendency to sensuality, the wilful indelicacy of her position in Henry's household as the rival of his queen, which made her last catastrophe at least possible. Of the justice of her sentence he has no doubt, any more than of her pre-engagement to some one, as proved by a letter existing among Cromwell's papers. Poor thing! If she did that which was laid to her charge, and more, she did nothing, after all, but what she had been in the habit of seeing the queens and princesses of the French court do notoriously, and laugh over shamelessly; while, as Mr. Froude well says, 'If we are to hold her entirely free from guilt, we place not only the King, but the Privy Council, the Judges, the Lords and Commons, and the two Houses of Convocation, in a position fatal to their honour and degrading to ordinary humanity' (Mr. Froude should have added Anne Boleyn's own uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, and her father, who were on the commission appointed to try her lovers, and her cousin, Anthony St. Leger, a man of the very highest character and ability, who was on the jury which found a true bill against her). 'We

cannot,' continues Mr. Froude, 'acquiesce without inquiry in so painful a conclusion. The English nation, also, as well as she, deserves justice at our hands; and it cannot be thought uncharitable if we look with some scrutiny at the career of a person, who, but for the catastrophe with which it closed, would not have so readily obtained forgiveness for having admitted the addresses of the King, or for having received the homage of the court as its future sovereign, while the King's wife, her mistress, as yet resided under the same roof.' Mr. Froude's conclusion is, after examining the facts, the same with the whole nation of England in Henry's reign: but no one can accuse him of want of sympathy with the unhappy woman, who reads the eloquent and affecting account of her trial and death, which ends his second volume. Our only fear is, that by having thus told the truth, he has, instead of justifying our ancestors, only added one more to the list of people who are to be 'given up' with a cynical shrug and smile. We have heard already, and among young ladies too, who can be as cynical as other people in these times, such speeches as, 'Well, I suppose he has proved Anne Boleyn to be a bad creature; but that does not make that horrid Henry any more right in cutting off her head.' Thus two people will be despised where only one was before, and the fact still ignored, that it is just as senseless to say that Henry cut off Anne Boleyn's head, as that Queen Victoria hanged Palmer. Death, and death of a far more horrible kind than that which Anne Boleyn suffered, was the established penalty of the

offences of which she was convicted; and which had in her case this fearful aggravation, that they were offences not against Henry merely, but against the whole English nation. She had been married in order that there might be an undisputed heir to the throne, and a fearful war avoided. To throw into dispute, by any conduct of hers, the legitimacy of her own offspring, argued a levity or a hard-heartedness which of itself deserved the severest punishment.

We will pass from this disagreeable topic, to Mr. Froude's lifelike sketch of Pope Clement, and the endless tracasseries into which his mingled weakness and cunning led him, and which, like most crooked dealings, ended by defeating their own object. Pages 125 et sqq. of Vol. I. contain sketches of him, his thoughts and ways, as amusing as they are historically important: but we have no space to quote from them. It will be well for those to whom the Reformation is still a matter of astonishment, to read those pages, and consider what manner of man he was, in spite of all pretended divine authority, under whose rule the Romish system received its irrecoverable wound.

But of all these figures, not excepting Henry's own, Wolsey stands out as the most grand and tragical; and Mr. Froude has done good service to history, if only in making us understand at last the wondrous 'butcher's son.' Shakspeare seems to have felt (though he could explain the reason neither to his auditors, nor, perhaps, to himself) that Wolsey was, on the whole, an heroical man. Mr. Froude shows at once his strength and his

weakness; his deep sense of the rottenness of the Church; his purpose to purge her from those abominations which were as well known, it seems, to him, as they were afterwards to the whole people of England; his vast schemes for education; his still vaster schemes for breaking the alliance with Spain, and uniting France and England as fellow-servants of the Pope, and twin-pillars of the sacred fabric of the Church, which helped so much toward his interest in Catherine's divorce, as a 'means' (these are his own words) 'to bind my most excellent sovereign and this glorious realm to the holy Roman See in faith and obedience for ever;' his hopes of deposing the Emperor, putting down the German heresies, and driving back the Turks beyond the pale of Christendom; his pathetic confession to the Bishop of Bayonne, that 'if he could only see the divorce arranged, the King re-married, the succession settled, and the laws and the Church reformed, he would retire from the world, and would serve God the remainder of his days.'

Peace be with him! He was surely a noble soul; misled, it may be—as who is not when his turn comes — by the pride of conscious power; and 'though he loved England well, yet loving Rome better:' but still it is a comfort to see, either in past or in present, one more brother whom we need not despise, even though he may have wasted his energies on a dream.

And on a dream he did waste them, in spite of all his cunning. As Mr. Froude, in a noble passage, says :—

Extravagant as his hopes seem, the prospect of realizing them was, humanly speaking, neither chimerical, nor even improbable. He had but made the common mistake of men of the world, who are the representatives of an old order of things, when that order is doomed and dying. He could not read the signs of the times; and confounding the barrenness of death with the barrenness of winter, which might be followed by a new spring and summer, he believed that the old life-tree of Catholicism, which in fact was but cumbering the ground, might bloom again in its old beauty. The thing which he called heresy was the fire of Almighty God, which no politic congregation of princes, no state machinery, though it were never so active, could trample out; and as, in the early years of Christianity, the meanest slave who was thrown to the wild beasts for his presence at the forbidden mysteries of the Gospel, saw deeper, in the divine power of his faith, into the future even of this earthly world, than the sagest of his imperial persecutors,—so a truer political prophet than Wolsey would have been found in the most ignorant of those poor men for whom his police were searching in the purlieus of London, who were risking death and torture in disseminating the pernicious volumes of the English Testament.

It will be seen from this magnificent passage that Mr. Froude is distinctly a Protestant. He is one, to judge from his book; and all the better one, because he can sympathise with whatsoever nobleness, even with whatsoever mere conservatism, existed in the Catholic party. And therefore, because he has sympathies which are not merely party ones, but human ones, he has given the world, in these two volumes, a history of the early Reformation altogether unequalled. This human sympathy, while it has enabled him to embalm in most affecting prose the sad story of the noble, though mistaken Carthusians, and to make even the Nun of Kent interesting, because truly womanly, in her very folly and deceit, has enabled him likewise to show us the hearts of the early martyrs as they

never have been shown before. His sketch of the Christian Brothers, and his little true romance of Anthony Dalaber, the Oxford student, are gems of writing; while his conception of Latimer, on whom he looks as the hero of the movement, and all but an English Luther, is as worthy of Latimer as it is of himself. It is written as history should be, discriminatingly, patiently, and yet lovingly and genially; rejoicing not in evil, but in the truth; and rejoicing still more in goodness, where goodness can honestly be found.

To the ecclesiastical and political elements in the English Reformation, Mr. Froude devotes a large portion of his book. We shall not enter into the questions which he discusses therein. That aspect of the movement is a foreign and a delicate subject, from discussing which a Scotch periodical may be excused.* North Britain had a somewhat different problem to solve from her southern sister, and solved it in an altogether different way: but this we must say, that the facts, and still more, the State Papers, (especially the petition of the Commons, as contrasted with the utterly benighted answer of the Bishops,) which Mr. Froude gives, are such as to raise our opinion of the method on which the English part of the Reformation was conducted, and make us believe, that in this, as in others matters, both Henry and his Parliament, though still doctrinal Romanists, were sound-headed practical Englishmen.

This result is of the same kind as most of those at

* This article appeared in the *North British Review*.

which Mr. Froude arrives. They form altogether a general justification of our ancestors in Henry the Eighth's time, if not of Henry the Eighth himself, which frees Mr. Froude from that charge of irreverence to the past generations, against which we protested in the beginning of the article. We hope honestly that he may be as successful in his next volumes as he has been in these, in vindicating the worthies of the sixteenth century. Whether he shall fail or not, and whether or not he has altogether succeeded, in the volumes before us, his book marks a new epoch, and, we trust, a healthier and loftier one, in English history. We trust that they inaugurate a time in which the deeds of our forefathers shall be looked on as sacred heirlooms; their sins as our shame, their victories as bequests to us; when men shall have sufficient confidence in those to whom they owe their existence, to scrutinize faithfully and patiently every fact concerning them, with a proud trust, that, search as they may, they will not find much of which to be ashamed.

Lastly, Mr. Froude takes a view of Henry's character, not, indeed, new, (for it is the original one,) but obsolete for now two hundred years. Let it be well understood, that he makes no attempt (he has been accused thereof) to whitewash Henry: all that he does is, to remove as far as he can the modern layers of 'black-wash,' and to let the man himself, fair or foul, be seen. For the result he is not responsible: it depends on facts; and unless Mr. Froude has knowingly concealed facts, to an amount of which even a Lingard

might be ashamed, the result is, that Henry the Eighth was actually very much the man which he appeared to be to the English nation in his own generation, and for two or three generations after his death,—a result which need not astonish us, if we will only give our ancestors credit for having, at least, as much common sense as ourselves, and believe (why should we not?) that, on the whole, they understood their own business better than we are likely to do.

The 'bloated tyrant,' it is confessed, contrived, somehow or other, to be popular enough. Mr. Froude tells us the reasons. He was not born a bloated tyrant, any more than Queen Elizabeth (though the fact is not generally known) was born a wizened old woman. He was, from youth, till he was long past his grand climacteric, a very handsome, powerful, and active man, temperate in his habits, good-humoured, frank and honest in his speech (as even his enemies are forced to confess). He seems to have been (as his portraits prove sufficiently), for good and for evil, a thorough John Bull; a thorough Englishman: but one of the very highest type.

Had he died (says Mr. Froude) previous to the first agitation of the divorce, his loss would have been deplored as one of the heaviest misfortunes which had ever befallen this country, and he would have left a name which would have taken its place in history by the side of the Black Prince or the Conqueror of Agincourt. Left at the most trying age, with his character unformed, with the means of gratifying every inclination, and married by his ministers, when a boy, to an unattractive woman far his senior, he had lived for thirty-six years almost without blame, and bore through England the reputation of an upright and virtuous king. Nature had been prodigal to him of her

rarest gifts. . . . Of his intellectual ability we are not left to judge from the suspicious panegyrics of his contemporaries. His State Papers and letters may be placed by the side of those of Wolsey, or of Cromwell, and they lose nothing by the comparison. Though they are broadly different, the perception is equally clear, the expression equally powerful; and they breathe throughout an irresistible vigour of purpose. In addition to this, he had a fine musical taste, carefully cultivated; he spoke and wrote in four languages; and his knowledge of a multitude of subjects, with which his versatile ability made him conversant, would have formed the reputation of any ordinary man. He was among the best physicians of his age. He was his own engineer, inventing improvements in artillery, and new constructions in shipbuilding; and this not with the condescending incapacity of a royal amateur, but with thorough workmanlike understanding. His reading was vast, especially in theology. He was 'attentive,' as it is called, 'to his religious duties,' being present at the services in chapel two or three times a day with unfailing regularity, and showing, to outward appearance, a real sense of religious obligation in the energy and purity of his life. In private he was good-humoured and good-natured. His letters to his secretaries, though never undignified, are simple, easy, and unrestrained, and the letters written by them to him are similarly plain and business-like, as if the writers knew that the person whom they were addressing disliked compliments, and chose to be treated as a man. He seems to have been always kind, always considerate; inquiring into their private concerns with genuine interest, and winning, as a consequence, their sincere and unaffected attachment. As a ruler, he had been eminently popular. All his wars had been successful. He had the splendid tastes in which the English people most delighted; . . . he had more than once been tried with insurrection, which he had soothed down without bloodshed, and extinguished in forgiveness. . . . . And it is certain, that if he had died before the divorce was mooted, Henry VIII., like the Roman emperor said by Tacitus to have been 'consensu omnium dignus imperii nisi imperasset,' would have been considered, by posterity, as formed by Providence for the conduct of the Reformation, and his loss would have been deplored as a perpetual calamity.

Mr. Froude has, of course, not written these words without having facts whereby to prove them. One he gives in an important note containing an extract from a

letter of the Venetian ambassador in 1515. At least, if his conclusions be correct, we must think twice ere we deny his assertion, that 'the man best able of all living Englishmen to govern England, had been set to do it by the conditions of his birth.'

'We are bound,' as Mr. Froude says, 'to allow him the benefit of his past career, and be careful to remember it, in interpreting his later actions.' 'The true defect in his moral constitution, that "intense and imperious will," common to all princes of the Plantagenet blood, had not yet been tested.' That he did, in his later years, act in many ways neither wisely nor well, no one denies; that his conduct did not alienate the hearts of his subjects, is what needs explanation; and Mr. Froude's opinions on this matter, novel as they are, and utterly opposed to that of the standard modern historians, require careful examination. Now I am not inclined to debate Henry the Eighth's character, or any other subject, as between Mr. Froude and an author of the obscurantist or pseudo-conservative school. Mr. Froude *is* Liberal; and so am I. I wish to look at the question as between Mr. Froude and other Liberals; and therefore, of course, first, as between Mr. Froude and Mr. Hallam.

Mr. Hallam's name is so venerable, and his work so important, that, to set ourselves up as judges in this, or in any matter, between him and Mr. Froude, would be mere impertinence: but speaking merely as learners, we have surely a right to inquire, why Mr. Hallam has entered on the whole question of Henry's relations to his

Parliament with a præjudicium against them; for which Mr. Froude finds no ground whatsoever in fact. Why are all acts both of Henry and his Parliament to be taken in malam partem? They were not Whigs, certainly: neither were Socrates and Plato, nor even St. Paul and St. John. They may have been honest men, as men go, or they may not: but why is there to be a feeling against them, rather than for them? Why is Henry always called a tyrant, and his Parliament servile? The epithets have become so common and unquestioned, that our interrogation may seem startling. Still we make it. Why was Henry a tyrant? That may be true, but must be proved by facts. Where are they? Is the mere fact of a monarch's asking for money a crime in him and his ministers? The question would rather seem to be, Were the moneys for which Henry asked needed or not; and when granted, were they rightly or wrongly applied? And on these subjects we want much more information than we obtain from any epithets. The author of a constitutional history should rise above epithets: or, if he uses them, should corroborate them by facts. Why should not historians be as fair and as cautious in accusing Henry and Wolsey, as they would be in accusing Queen Victoria and Lord Palmerston? What right, allow us to ask, has a grave constitutional historian to say, that 'We cannot, indeed, doubt, that the unshackled and despotic condition of his friend, Francis I., afforded a mortifying contrast to Henry?' What document exists in which Henry is represented as regretting that he is

the king of a free people?—for such Mr. Hallam confesses, just above, England was held to be, and was actually, in comparison with France. If the document does not exist, Mr. Hallam has surely stepped out of the field of the historian into that of the novelist, à la Scott or Dumas. The Parliament sometimes grants Henry's demands: sometimes it refuses them, and he has to help himself by other means. Why are both cases to be interpreted in malam partem? Why is the Parliament's granting to be always a proof of its servility?—its refusing, always a proof of Henry's tyranny and rapacity? Both views are mere præjudicia, reasonable perhaps, and possible: but why is not a præjudicium of the opposite kind as rational and as possible? Why has not a historian a right to start, as Mr. Froude does, by taking for granted, that both parties may have been on the whole right; that the Parliament granted certain sums because Henry was right in asking for them; refused others because Henry was wrong; even that, in some cases, Henry may have been right in asking, the Parliament wrong in refusing; and that in such a case, under the pressure of critical times, Henry was forced to get as he could the money which he saw that the national cause required? Let it be as folks will. Let Henry be sometimes right, and the Parliament sometimes likewise; or the Parliament always right, or Henry always right; or anything else, save this strange diseased theory, that both must have been always wrong, and that, evidence to that effect failing, motives must be insinuated, or openly asserted, from the writer's mere

imagination. This may be a dream: but it is as easy to imagine as the other, and more pleasant also. It will probably be answered (though not by Mr. Hallam himself) by a sneer: 'You do not seem to know much of the world, sir.' But so would Figaro and Gil Blas have said, and on exactly the same grounds.

Let us examine a stock instance of Henry's 'rapacity' and his Parliament's servility, namely, the exactions in 1524 and 1525, and the subsequent 'release of the king's debts.' What are the facts of the case? France and Scotland had attacked England in 1514. The Scotch were beaten at Flodden. The French lost Tournay and Thérouenne, and, when peace was made, agreed to pay the expenses of the war. Times changed, and the expenses were not paid.

A similar war arose in 1524, and cost England immense sums. A large army was maintained on the Scotch Border, another army invaded France; and Wolsey, not venturing to call a Parliament,—because he was, as Pope's legate, liable to a præmunire,—raised money by contributions and benevolences, which were levied, it seems on the whole, uniformly and equally (save that they weighed more heavily on the rich than on the poor, if that be a fault), and differed from taxes only in not having received the consent of Parliament. Doubtless, this was not the best way of raising money: but what if, under the circumstances, it were the only one? What if, too, on the whole, the money so raised was really given willingly by the nation? The sequel alone could decide that.

The first contribution for which Wolsey asked was paid. The second was resisted, and was not paid; proving thereby that the nation need not pay unless it chose. The Court gave way; and the war became defensive only, till 1525.

Then the tide turned. The danger, then, was not from Francis, but from the Emperor. Francis was taken prisoner at Pavia; and, shortly after, Rome was sacked by Bourbon.

The effect of all this in England is told at large in Mr. Froude's second chapter. Henry became bond for Francis's ransom, to be paid to the Emperor. He spent 500,000 crowns more in paying the French army; and in the terms of peace made with France, a sum-total was agreed on for the whole debt, old and new, to be paid as soon as possible; and an annual pension of 500,000 crowns besides. The French exchequer, however, still remained bankrupt, and again the money was not paid.

Parliament, when it met in 1529, reviewed the circumstances of the expenditure, and finding it all such as the nation on the whole approved, legalized the taxation by benevolences, retrospectively: and this is the whole mare's nest of the first payment of Henry's debts; if, at least, any faith is to be put in the preamble of the Act for the release of the King's Debts, 21 Hen. VIII. c. 24. 'The King's loving subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, calling to remembrance the inestimable costs, charges, and expenses which the

King's Highness hath necessarily been compelled to support and sustain since his assumption to his crown, estate, and dignity royal, as well for the extinction of a right dangerous and damnable schism, sprung in the Church, as for the modifying the insatiable and inordinate ambition of them, who, while aspiring to the monarchy of Christendom, did put universal troubles and divisions in the same, intending, if they might, not only to have subdued this realm, but also all the rest, unto their power and subjection—for resistance whereof, the King's Highness was compelled to marvellous charges—both for the supportation of sundry armies by sea and land, and also for divers and manifold contribution on hand, to save and keep his own subjects at home in rest and repose—which hath been so politically handled, that when the most part of all Christian lands have been infested with cruel wars, the great Head and Prince of the world (the Pope) brought into captivity, cities and towns taken, spoiled, burnt, and sacked—the King's said subjects in all this time, by the high providence and politic means of his Grace, have been nevertheless preserved, defended, and maintained from all these inconvenients, &c.

'Considering, furthermore, that his Highness, in and about the premises, hath been fain to employ not only all such sums of money as hath risen or grown by contributions made unto his Grace by his loving subjects —but also, over and above the same, sundry other notable and excellent sums of his own treasure and yearly revenues, among which manifold great sums so

employed, his Highness, also, as is notoriously known, and as doth evidently appear by the ACCOUNTS OF THE SAME, hath to that use, and none other, converted all such money as by any of his subjects hath been advanced to his Grace by way of prest or loan, either particularly, or by any taxation made of the same—being things so well collocate and bestowed, seeing the said high and great fruits and effects thereof insured to the surety and commodity and tranquillity of this realm—of our mind and consent, do freely, absolutely, give and grant to the King's Highness all and every sum or sums of money,' &c.

The second release of the King's debts, in 1544, is very similar. The King's debts and necessities were really, when we come to examine them, those of the nation: in 1538-40 England was put into a thorough state of defence from end to end. Fortresses were built along the Scottish Border, and all along the coast opposite France and Flanders. The people were drilled and armed, the fleet equipped; and the nation, for the time, became one great army. And nothing but this, as may be proved by an overwhelming mass of evidence, saved the country from invasion. Here were enormous necessary expenses which must be met.

In 1543, a million crowns were to have been paid by Francis the First, as part of his old debt. It was not paid: but, on the contrary, Henry had to go to war for it. The nation again relinquished their claim, and allowed Henry to raise another benevolence in 1545, concerning which Mr. Hallam tells us a great deal, but

not one word of the political circumstances which led to it or to the release, keeping his sympathies and his paper for the sorrows of refractory Alderman Reed, who, refusing (alone of all the citizens) to contribute to the support of troops on the Scotch Border or elsewhere, was sent down, by a sort of rough justice, to serve on the Scotch Border himself, and judge of the 'perils of the nation' with his own eyes; and being—one is pleased to hear—taken prisoner by the Scots, had to pay a great deal more as ransom than he would have paid as benevolence.

But to return. What proof is there, in all this, of that servility which most historians, and Mr. Hallam among the rest, are wont to attribute to Henry's Parliaments? What feeling appears on the face of this document, which we have given and quoted, but one honourable to the nation? Through the falsehood of a foreign nation, the King is unable to perform his engagements to the people. Is not the just and generous course in such a case, to release him from those engagements? Does this preamble, does a single fact of the case, justify historians in talking of these 'king's debts' in just the same tone as that in which they would have spoken if the King had squandered the money on private pleasures? Perhaps most people who write small histories believe that this really was the case. They certainly would gather no other impression from the pages of Mr. Hallam. No doubt the act must have been burdensome on some people. Many, we are told, had bequeathed their promissory notes to their children,

used their reversionary interest in the loan in many ways; and these, of course, felt the change very heavily. No doubt; but why have we not a right to suppose that the Parliament were aware of that fact; but chose it as the less of the two evils? The King had spent the money; he was unable to recover it from Francis; could only refund it by raising some fresh tax or benevolence: and why may not the Parliament have considered the release of old taxes likely to offend fewer people than the imposition of new ones? It is, certainly, an ugly thing to break public faith; but to prove that public faith was broken, we must prove that Henry compelled the Parliament to release him; if the act was of their own free will, no public faith was broken, for they were the representatives of the nation, and through them, the nation forgave its own debt. And what evidence have we that they did not represent the nation, and that, on the whole, we must suppose, as we should in the case of any other men, that they best knew their own business? May we not apply to this case, and to others, mutatis mutandis, the argument which Mr. Froude uses so boldly and well in the case of Anne Boleyn's trial—'The English nation, also, as well as . . . . deserves justice at our hands?'

Certainly it does: but it is a disagreeable token of the method on which we have been accustomed to write the history of our own forefathers, that Mr. Froude should find it necessary to state formally so very simple a truth.

What proof, we ask again, is there that this old

Parliament was 'servile?' Had that been so, Wolsey would not have been afraid to summon it. The specific reason for not summoning a Parliament for six years after that of 1524 was, that they were not servile; that when (here we are quoting Mr. Hallam, and not Mr. Froude) Wolsey entered the House of Commons with a great train, seemingly for the purpose of intimidation, they 'made no other answer to his harangues, than that it was their usage to debate only among themselves.' The debates on this occasion lasted fifteen or sixteen days, during which, says an eye-witness, 'there has been the greatest and sorest hold in the Lower House,' 'the matter debated and beaten;' 'such hold that the House was like to have been dissevered;' in a word, hard fighting—and why not honest fighting?—between the Court party and the Opposition, 'which ended,' says Mr. Hallam, 'in the Court party obtaining, with the utmost difficulty, a grant much inferior to the Cardinal's original requisition.' What token of servility is here?

And is it reasonable to suppose, that after Wolsey was conquered, and a comparatively popular ministry had succeeded, and that memorable Parliament of 1529 (which Mr. Froude, not unjustly, thinks more memorable than the Long Parliament itself) began its great work with a high hand, backed not merely by the King, but by the public opinion of the majority of England, their decisions are likely to have been more servile than before? If they resisted the King when they disagreed with him, are they to be accused of ser-

vility because they worked with him when they agreed with him? Is an Opposition always in the right; a ministerial party always in the wrong? Is it an offence against the people to agree with the monarch, even when he agrees with the people himself? Simple as these questions are, one must really stop to ask them.

No doubt, pains were often taken to secure elections favourable to the Government. Are none taken now? Are not more taken now? Will any historian show us the documents which prove the existence, in the sixteenth century, of Reform Club, Carlton Club, whippers-in and nominees, governmental and opposition, and all the rest of the beautiful machinery which protects our Reformed Parliament from the evil influences of bribery and corruption? Pah!—We have somewhat too much glass in our modern House to afford to throw stones at our forefathers' old St. Stephen's. At the worst, what was done then but that without which it is said to be impossible to carry on a Government now? Take an instance from the Parliament of 1539, one in which there is no doubt Government influence was used, in order to prevent as much as possible the return of members favourable to the clergy—for the good reason, that the clergy were no doubt on their own side intimidating voters by all those terrors of the unseen world which had so long been to them a source of boundless profit and power.

Cromwell writes to the King to say that he has secured a seat for a certain Sir Richard Morrison;

but for what purpose? As one who no doubt 'should be ready to answer and take up such as should crack or face with literature of learning, if any such should be.' There was, then, free discussion; they expected clever and learned speakers in the Opposition, and on subjects of the deepest import, not merely political, but spiritual; and the Government needed men to answer such. What more natural, than that so close on the 'Pilgrimage of Grace,' and in the midst of so great dangers, at home and abroad, the Government should have done their best to secure a well-disposed House (one would like to know when they would not)? But surely the very effort (confessedly exceptional), and the acknowledged difficulty, prove that Parliament were no mere 'registrars of edicts.'

But the strongest argument against the tyranny of the Tudors, and especially of Henry VIII., in his 'benevolences,' is derived from the state of the people themselves. If these benevolences had been really unpopular, they would not have been paid. In one case, we have seen, a benevolence was not paid for that very reason. For the method of the Tudor sovereigns, like that of their predecessors, was the very opposite to that of tyrants, in every age and country. The first act of a tyrant has always been to disarm the people, and to surround himself with a standing army. The Tudor method was, as Mr. Froude shows us by many interesting facts, to keep the people armed and drilled, even to compel them to learn the use of weapons. Throughout England spread one vast

military organization, which made every adult a soldier, and enabled him to find, at a day's notice, his commanding officer, whether landlord, sheriff, or lieutenant of the county; so that, as a foreign ambassador of the time remarks with astonishment (we quote from memory), 'England is the strongest nation on earth, for though the King has not a single mercenary soldier, he can raise in three days an army of two hundred thousand men.'

And of what temper those men were it is well known enough. Mr. Froude calls them—and we beg leave to endorse, without exception, Mr. Froude's opinion—'A sturdy high-hearted race, sound in body, and fierce in spirit, and furnished with thews and sinews, which, under the stimulus of those "great shins of beef," their common diet, were the wonder of the age.' 'What comyn folke in all this world,' says a State Paper in 1515, 'may compare with the comyns of England in riches, freedom, liberty, welfare and all prosperity? What comyn folk is so mighty, so strong in the felde, as the comyns of England?' In authentic stories of actions under Henry VIII. —and we will add, under Elizabeth likewise—where the accuracy of the account is undeniable, no disparity of force made Englishmen shrink from enemies whenever they could meet them. Again and again a few thousands of them carried dismay into the heart of France. Four hundred adventurers, vagabond apprentices of London, who formed a volunteer corps in the Calais garrison, were for years, Hall says, the terror

of Normandy. In the very frolic of conscious power they fought and plundered, without pay, without reward, save what they could win for themselves; and when they fell at last, they fell only when surrounded by six times their number, and were cut to pieces in careless desperation. Invariably, by friend and foe alike, the English are described as the fiercest people in all Europe—English wild beasts, Benvenuto Cellini calls them; and this great physical power they owed to the profuse abundance in which they lived, to the soldier's training, in which every one of them was bred from childhood.

Mr. Froude's novel assertion about profuse abundance must be weighed by those who have read his invaluable introductory chapter. But we must ask at once, how it was possible to levy on such an armed populace a tax which they were determined not to pay, and felt that they were not bound to pay, either in law or justice? Conceive Lord Palmerston's sending down to demand a 'benevolence' from the army at Aldershot, beginning with the general in command and descending to the privates. . . . What would be the consequences? Ugly enough: but gentle in comparison with those of any attempt to exact a really unpopular tax from a nation of well-armed Englishmen, unless they, on the whole, thought the tax fit to be paid. They would grumble, of course, whether they intended to pay or not,—for were they not Englishmen, our own flesh and blood?—and grumble all the more in person, because they had no Press to grumble for

them: but what is there then in the M.P.'s letter to Lord Surrey, quoted by Mr. Hallam, p. 25, or in the more pointed letter of Warham's, two pages on, which we do not see lying on our breakfast tables in half the newspapers every week? Poor, pedantic, obstructive old Warham, himself very angry at so much being asked of his brother clergymen, and at their being sworn as to the value of their goods (so like are old times to new ones); and being, on the whole, of opinion that the world (the Church included) is going to the devil, says that as he has been 'showed in a secret manner of his friends, the people sore grudgeth and murmureth, and speaketh cursedly among themselves, as far as they dare, saying they shall never have rest of payments as long as some liveth, and that they had better die than thus be continually handed, reckoning themselves, their wives and children, as despoulit, and not greatly caring what they do, or what becomes of them.'

Very dreadful—if true: which last point depends very much upon who Warham was. Now, on reading Mr. Froude's, or any other good history, we shall find that Warham was one of the leaders of that despondent party which will always have its antitype in England. Have we, too, not heard within the last seven years, similar prophecies of desolation, mourning, and woe—of the Church tottering on the verge of ruin, the peasantry starving under the horrors of free-trade, noble families reduced to the verge of beggary by double income-tax? Even such a prophet seems Warham to have been—of

all people in that day, one of the last whom one would have asked for an opinion.

Poor old Warham, however, was not so far wrong in this particular case; for the 'despoulit' slaves of Suffolk, not content with grumbling, rose up with sword and bow, and vowed that they would not pay. Whereon the bloated tyrant sent his prætorians, and enforced payment by scourge and thumbscrew? Not in the least. They would not pay; and, therefore, being free men, nobody could make them pay; and although in the neighbouring county of Norfolk, from twenty pounds (i.e. 200*l.* of our money) upward—for the tax was not levied on men of less substance—there were not twenty but what had consented; and though there was 'great likelihood that this grant should be much more than the loan was' (the 'salt tears' shed by the gentlemen of Norfolk proceeding, says expressly the Duke of Norfolk, 'only from doubt how to find money to content the King's Highness;' yet the King and Wolsey gave way frankly and at once, and the contribution was remitted, although the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, writing to Wolsey, treat the insurrection lightly, and seem to object to the remission as needless.

From all which facts—they are Mr. Hallam's, not Mr. Froude's—we can deduce not tyranny, but lenity, good sense, and the frank withdrawal from a wrong position, as soon as the unwillingness of the people proved it to be a wrong one.

This instance is well brought forward (though only in a line or two, by Mr. Froude) as one among many

proofs that the working classes in Henry the Eighth's time 'enjoyed an abundance far beyond that which in general falls to the lot of that order in long-settled countries, incomparably beyond what the same class were enjoying at that very time in Germany or France. The laws secured them; and that the laws were put in force, we have the direct evidence of successive acts of the Legislature, justifying the general policy by its success: and we have also the indirect evidence of the contented loyalty of the great body of the people, at a time when, if they had been discontented, they held in their own hands the means of asserting what the law acknowledged to be their right. The Government,' as we have just shown at length, 'had no power to compel injustice. . . . . If the peasantry had been suffering under any real grievances, we should have heard of them when the religious rebellions furnished so fair an opportunity to press them forward. Complaint was loud enough, when complaint was just, under the Somerset Protectorate.'

Such broad facts as these—for facts they are—ought to make us pause ere we boast of the greater liberty enjoyed by Englishmen of the present day, as compared with the tyranny of Tudor times. Thank God, there is no lack of that blessing now: but was there any real lack of it then? Certainly the outward notes of a tyranny exist now in far greater completeness than then. A standing army, a Government police, ministries who bear no love to a militia, and would consider the compulsory arming and drilling of the people as a

dangerous insanity, do not look at first sight as much like 'free institutions' as a Government which, though again and again in danger not merely of rebellion, but of internecine wars of succession, so trusted the people, as to force weapons into their hands from boyhood. Let us not be mistaken: we are no hankerers after retrogression: the present system works very well; let it be; all that we say is, that the imputation of despotic institutions lies, primâ facie, rather against the reign of Queen Victoria than against that of King Henry the Eighth. Of course, it is not so in fact. Many modern methods, which are despotic in appearance, are not so in practice. Let us believe that the same was the case in the sixteenth century. Our governors now understand their own business best, and make a very fair compromise between discipline and freedom. Let us believe that the men of the sixteenth century did so likewise. All we ask is, that our forefathers should be judged as we wish to be judged ourselves, 'not according to outward appearance, but with righteous judgment.'

Mr. Froude finds the cause of this general contentment and loyalty of the masses, in the extreme care which the Government took of their well-being. The introductory chapter, in which he proves to his own satisfaction the correctness of his opinion, is well worth the study of our political economists. The facts which he brings seem certainly overwhelming; of course, they can only be met by counter-facts: and our knowledge does not enable us either to corroborate or refute his

statements. The chief argument used against them seems to us, at least, to show, that for some cause or other, the working classes were prosperous enough. It is said the Acts of Parliament regulating wages do not fix the minimum of wages, but the maximum. They are not intended to defend the employed against the employer, but the employer against the employed, in a defective state of the labour market, when the workmen, by the fewness of their numbers, were enabled to make extravagant demands. Let this be the case—we do not say that it is so—what is it but a token of prosperity among the working classes? A labour market so thin that workmen can demand their own price for their labour, till Parliament is compelled to bring them to reason, is surely a time of prosperity to the employed,—a time of full work and high wages; of full stomachs, inclined from very prosperity to 'wax fat and kick.' If, however, any learned statistician should be able to advance, on the opposite side of the question, enough to weaken some of Mr. Froude's conclusions, he must still, if he be a just man, do honour to the noble morality of this most striking chapter, couched as it is in as perfect English as we have ever had the delight of reading. We shall leave, then, the battle of facts to be fought out by statisticians, always asking Mr. Froude's readers to bear in mind, that though other facts may be true, yet his facts are no less true likewise; and we shall quote at length, both as a specimen of his manner and of his matter, the last three pages of this introductory chapter, in which, after speaking of the

severity of the laws against vagrancy, and showing how they were excused by the organization which found employment for every able-bodied man, he goes on to say:—

It was, therefore, the expressed conviction of the English nation, that it was better for a man not to live at all than to live a profitless and worthless life. The vagabond was a sore spot upon the commonwealth, to be healed by wholesome discipline if the gangrene was not incurable; to be cut away with the knife, if the milder treatment of the cart-whip failed to be of profit.

A measure so extreme in its severity was partly dictated by policy. The state of the country was critical; and the danger from questionable persons traversing it unexamined and uncontrolled was greater than at ordinary times. But in point of justice as well as of prudence, it harmonized with the iron temper of the age, and it answered well for the government of a fierce and powerful people, in whose hearts lay an intense hatred of rascality, and among whom no one could have lapsed into evil courses except by deliberate preference for them. The moral sinew of the English must have been strong indeed when it admitted of such stringent bracing; but, on the whole, they were ruled as they preferred to be ruled; and if wisdom can be tested by success, the manner in which they passed the great crisis of the Reformation is the best justification of their princes. The era was great throughout Europe. The Italians of the age of Michael Angelo; the Spaniards who were the contemporaries of Cortez; the Germans who shook off the Pope at the call of Luther; and the splendid chivalry of Francis I. of France, were no common men. But they were all brought face to face with the same trials, and none met them as the English met them. The English alone never lost their self-possession, and if they owed something to fortune in their escape from anarchy, they owed more to the strong hand and steady purpose of their rulers.

To conclude this chapter, then.

In the brief review of the system under which England was governed, we have seen a state of things in which the principles of political economy were, consciously or unconsciously, contradicted; where an attempt, more or less successful, was made to bring the production and distribution of wealth under the moral rule of right or wrong; and where those laws of supply and demand, which we

are now taught to regard as immutable ordinances of nature, were absorbed or superseded by a higher code. It is necessary for me to repeat that I am not holding up the sixteenth century as a model which the nineteenth might safely follow. The population has become too large, and employment too complicated and fluctuating, to admit of such control; while, in default of control, the relapse upon self-interest as the one motive principle is certain to ensue, and, when it ensues, is absolute in its operations. But as, even with us, these so-called ordinances of nature in time of war consent to be suspended, and duty to his country becomes with every good citizen a higher motive of action than the advantages which he may gain in an enemy's market; so it is not uncheering to look back upon a time when the nation was in a normal condition of militancy against social injustice,—when the Government was enabled, by happy circumstances, to pursue into detail a single and serious aim at the well-being—well-being in its widest sense—of all members of the commonwealth. There were difficulties and drawbacks at that time as well as this. Of Liberty, in the modern sense of the word,—of the supposed right of every man 'to do what he will with his own,' or with himself,—there was no idea. To the question, if ever it was asked, 'May I not do what I will with my own?' there was the brief answer, 'No man may do what is wrong, either with what is his own or with what is another's.' Producers, too, who were not permitted to drive down their workmen's wages by competition, could not sell their goods as cheaply as they might have done, and the consumer paid for the law in an advance of price; but the burden, though it fell heavily on the rich, lightly touched the poor; and the rich consented cheerfully to a tax which ensured the loyalty of the people. The working man of modern times has bought the extension of his liberty at the price of his material comfort. The higher classes have gained in wealth what they have lost in power. It is not for the historian to balance advantages. His duty is with the facts.

Our forefathers, then, were not free, if we attach to that word the meaning which our Transatlantic brothers seem inclined to give to it. They had not learnt to deify self-will, and to claim for each member of the human race a right to the indulgence of every eccen-

tricity. They called themselves free, and boasted of their freedom; but their conception of liberty was that of all old nations, a freedom which not only allowed of discipline, but which grew out of it. No people had less wish to exalt the kingly power into that specious tyranny, a paternal Government; the king was, with them, and always had been, both formally and really, subject to their choice; bound by many oaths to many duties; the minister, not the master of the people. But their whole conception of political life was, nevertheless, shaped by their conception of family life. Strict obedience, stern discipline, compulsory education in practical duties, was the law of the latter; without such training they thought their sons could never become in any true sense men. And when they grew up, their civic life was to be conducted on the same principles, for the very purpose of enabling them to live as members of a free nation. If the self-will of the individual was curbed, now and then, needlessly—as it is the nature of all human methods to caricature themselves at times—the purpose was, not to weaken the man, but to strengthen him by strengthening the body to which he belonged. The nation was to be free, self-helping, self-containing, unconquerable; to that great purpose the will, the fancy—even, if need be, the mortal life of the individual, must give way. Men must be trained at all costs in self-restraint, because only so could they become heroes in the day of danger; in self-sacrifice for the common good, because only so would they remain united, while foreign nations and

evil home influences were trying to tear them asunder. In a word, their conception of life was as a warfare; their organization, that of a regiment. It is a question whether the conception of corporate life embodied in a regiment or army, be not, after all, the best working one for this world. At least the problem of a perfect society, howsoever beautiful on paper, will always issue in a compromise, more or less perfect—let us hope more and more perfect as the centuries roll on—between the strictness of military discipline and the Irishman's laissez-faire ideal, wherein 'every man should do that which was right in the sight of his own eyes, and wrong too, if he liked.' At least, such had England been for centuries; under such a system had she thriven; a fact which, duly considered, should silence somewhat those gentlemen who, not being of a military turn themselves, inform Europe so patriotically and so prudently, that 'England is not a military nation.'

From this dogma we beg leave to differ utterly. Britain is at this moment, in our eyes, the only military nation in Europe. All other nations seem to us to have military governments, but not to be military themselves. As proof of the assertion, we appeal merely to the existence of our militia. While other nations are employing conscription, we have raised, in twelve months, a noble army, every soul of which has volunteered as a free man; and yet, forsooth, we are not a military nation! We are not ashamed to tell how, but the other day, standing in the rear of those militia regiments, no matter where, a flush of pride

came over us at the sight of those lads, but a few months since helpless and awkward country boors, now full of sturdy intelligence, cheerful obedience, and the manhood which can afford to be respectful to others, because it respects itself, and knows that it is respected in turn. True, they had not the lightness, the order, the practical ease, the cunning self-helpfulness of the splendid German legionaries who stood beside them, the breast of every other private decorated with clasps and medals for service in the wars of seven years since. As an invading body, perhaps, one would have preferred the Germans; but only because experience had taught them already, what it would teach in twelve months to the Berkshire or Cambridge 'clod.' There, to us, was the true test of England's military qualities; her young men had come by tens of thousands, of their own free will, to be made soldiers of by her country gentlemen, and treated by them the while as men to be educated, not as things to be compelled; not driven like sheep to the slaughter, to be disciplined by men with whom they had no bond but the mere official one of military obedience; and 'What,' we asked ourselves, 'does England lack to make her a second Rome?' Her people have physical strength, animal courage, that self-dependence of freemen which enabled at Inkerman the privates to fight on literally without officers, every man for his own hand. She has inventive genius, enormous wealth; and if, as is said, her soldiers lack at present the self-helpfulness of the Zouave, it is ridiculous to suppose that that quality could long be

wanting in the men of a nation which is at this moment the foremost in the work of emigration and colonization. If organizing power and military system be, as is said, lacking in high quarters, surely there must be organizing power enough somewhere in the greatest industrial nation upon earth, ready to come forward, when there is a real demand for it; and, whatever be the defects of our system, we are surely not as far behind Prussia or France, as Rome was behind the Carthaginians and the Greeks whom she crushed. A few years sufficed for them to learn all they needed from their enemies; fewer still would suffice us to learn from our friends. Our working classes are not, like those of America, in a state of physical comfort too great to make it worth while for them to leave their home occupations; and whether that be a good or an evil, it at least ensures us, as our militia proves, an almost inexhaustible supply of volunteers. What a new and awful scene for the world's drama, did such a nation as this once set before itself, steadily and ruthlessly, as Rome did of old, the idea of conquest. Even now, waging war as she has done, as it were, ἐν παρεργῷ, thinking war too unimportant a part of her work to employ on it her highest intellects, her flag has advanced in the last fifty years over more vast and richer tracts than that of any European nation upon earth. What keeps her from the dream which lured to their destruction Babylon, Macedonia, Rome?

This: that, thank God, she has a conscience still; that, feeling intensely the sacredness of her own national

life, she has learned to look on that of other people's as sacred also; and since, in the fifteenth century, she finally repented of that wild and unrighteous dream of conquering France, she has discovered more and more that true military greatness lies in the power of defence, and not of attack; not in waging war, but being able to wage it; and has gone on her true mission of replenishing the earth more peacefully, on the whole, and more humanely, than did ever nation before her; conquering only when it was necessary to put down the lawlessness of the savage few for the well-being of the civilized many. This has been her idea; she may have confused it and herself, in Caffre or in Chinese wars; for who can always be true to the light within him? But this has been her idea; and therefore she stands and grows and thrives, a virgin land for now eight hundred years.

But a fancy has come over us, during the last blessed forty years of unexampled peace, from which our ancestors of the sixteenth century were kept, by stern and yet most wholesome lessons; the fancy that peace, and not war, is the normal condition of the world. The fancy is so fair, that we blame none who cherish it; after all, they do good by cherishing it; they point us to an ideal which we should otherwise forget, as Babylon, Rome, France in the seventeenth century, forgot utterly. Only they are in haste (and pardonable haste too) to realize that ideal, forgetting that to do so would be really to stop short of it, and to rest contented in some form of human society far lower than

that which God has actually prepared for those who love Him. Better to believe that all our conceptions of the height to which the human race might attain, are poor and paltry compared with that toward which God is guiding it, and for which he is disciplining it by awful lessons: and to fight on, if need be, ruthless, and yet full of pity—and many a noble soul has learnt within the last two years how easy it is to reconcile in practice that seeming paradox of words—smiting down stoutly evil wheresoever we shall find it, and saying, 'What ought to be, we know not; God alone can know: but that this ought not to be, we do know, and here, in God's name, it shall not stay.'

We repeat it: war, in some shape or other, is the normal condition of the world. It is a fearful fact: but we shall not abolish it by ignoring it, and ignoring by the same method the teaching of our Bibles. Not in mere metaphor does the gospel of Love describe the life of the individual good man as a perpetual warfare. Not in mere metaphor does the apostle of love see in his visions of the world's future no Arcadian shepherd paradises, not even a perfect civilization, but an eternal war in heaven, wrath and woe, plague and earthquake; and amid the everlasting storm, the voices of the saints beneath the altar, crying, 'Lord, how long?' Shall we pretend to have more tender hearts than the old man of Ephesus, whose dying sermon, so old legends say, was nought but—'Little children, love one another;' and who yet could denounce the liar and the hater and the covetous man, and pro-

claim the vengeance of God against all evil-doers, with all the fierceness of an Isaiah? It was enough for him —let it be enough for us—that he should see, above the thunder-cloud, and the rain of blood, and the scorpion swarm, and the great angel calling all the fowl of heaven to the supper of the great God, that they might eat the flesh of kings and valiant men, a city of God eternal in the heavens, and yet eternally descending among men; a perfect order, justice, love, and peace, becoming actual more and more in every age, through all the fearful training needful for a fallen race.

Let that be enough for us: but do not let us fancy that what is true of the two extremes must not needs be true of the mean also; that while the life of the individual and of the universe is one of perpetual self-defence, the life of the nation can be aught else: or that any appliances of scientific comforts, any intellectual cultivation, even any the most direct and common-sense arguments of self-interest, can avail to quiet in man those outbursts of wrath, ambition, cupidity, wounded pride, which have periodically convulsed, and will convulse to the end, the human race. The philosopher in his study may prove their absurdity, their suicidal folly, till, deluded by the strange lull of a forty years' peace, he may look on wars as in the same category with flagellantisms, witch-manias, and other 'popular delusions;' as insanities of the past, impossible henceforth; and may prophesy, as really wise political economists were doing in 1847, that mankind had grown too sen-

sible to go to war any more. And behold, the peace proves only to be the lull before the thunderstorm; and one electric shock sets free forces unsuspected, transcendental, supernatural in the deepest sense; forces which we can no more stop, by shrieks at their absurdity, from incarnating themselves in actual blood, and misery, and horror, than we can control the madman in his paroxysm, by telling him that he is a madman. And so the fair vision of the student is buried once more in rack and hail and driving storm; and, like Daniel of old when rejoicing over the coming restoration of his people, he sees beyond the victory some darker struggle still, and lets his notes of triumph die away into a wail, —'And the end thereof shall be with a flood; and to the end of the war desolations are determined.'

It is as impossible as it would be unwise, to conceal from ourselves the fact, that all the Continental nations look upon our present peace as but transitory, momentary; and on the Crimean war as but the prologue to a fearful drama—all the more fearful because none knows its purpose, its plot, which character will be assumed by any given actor, and, least of all, the dénouement of the whole. All that they feel and know is, that everything which has happened since 1848 has exasperated, not calmed, the electric tension of the European atmosphere; that a rottenness, rapidly growing intolerable alike 'to God and the enemies of God,' has eaten into the vitals of Continental life; that their rulers know neither where they are nor whither they are going, and only pray that things may last out their time:

all notes which one would interpret as proving the Continent to be already ripe for subjection to some one devouring race of conquerors, were there not a ray of hope in an expectation, even more painful to our human pity, which is held by some of the wisest among the Germans; namely, that the coming war will fast resolve into no struggle between bankrupt monarchs and their respective armies, but a war between nations themselves, an internecine war of opinions and of creeds. There are wise Germans now who prophesy, with sacred tears, a second 'Thirty Years' War,' with all its frantic horrors, for their hapless country, which has found two centuries too short a time wherein to recover from the exhaustion of that first fearful scourge. Let us trust, if that war shall beget its new Tillys and Wallensteins, it shall also beget its new Gustavus Adolphus, and many another child of Light: but let us not hope that we can stand by in idle comfort, and that when the overflowing scourge passes by it shall not reach to us. Shame to us, were that our destiny! Shame to us, were we to refuse our share in the struggles of the human race, and to stand by in idle comfort while the Lord's battles are being fought. Honour to us, if in that day we have chosen for our leaders, as our forefathers of the sixteenth century did, men who see the work which God would have them do, and have hearts and heads to do it. Honour to us, if we spend this transient lull, as our forefathers of the sixteenth century did, in setting our house in order, in redressing every grievance, reforming every abuse, knitting the

hearts of the British nation together by practical care and help between class and class, man and man, governor and governed, that we may bequeath to our children, as Henry the Eighth's men did to theirs, a British national life, so united and whole-hearted, so clear in purpose and sturdy in execution, so trained to know the right side at the first glance, and take it, that they shall look back with love and honour upon us, their fathers, determined to carry out, even to the death, the method which we have bequeathed to them. Then, if God will that the powers of evil, physical and spiritual, should combine against this land, as they did in the days of good Queen Bess, we shall not have lived in vain; for those who, as in Queen Bess's days, thought to yoke for their own use a labouring ox, will find, as then, that they have roused a lion from his den.

THE END.

LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018